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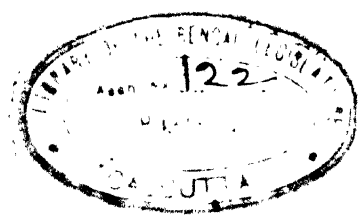
Assembly Proceedings

Official Report

Bengal Legislative Assembly

Sixteenth Session, 1943

The 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 12th, 13th and 14th
July, 1943



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1943

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

His Excellency Sir JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

The Hon'ble Khwaja SIR NAZIMUDDIN, K.C.I.E., in charge of the Home (Civil Defence Co-ordination) Department.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY, in charge of the Department of Civil Supplies.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI, in charge of the Finance Department.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN, in charge of the Education Department.

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN, in charge of the Department of Communications and Works.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN, in charge of the Department of Agriculture (Rural Reconstruction).

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAKNATH MUKERJEA, M.B.E., in charge of the Revenue Department (Evacuation and Relief).

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur, in charge of the Judicial and Legislative Department.

The Hon'ble Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN, C.B.E., in charge of the Departments of Commerce, Labour and Industries (including Postwar Reconstruction).

The Hon'ble Mr. PREMHARI BARMA, in charge of the Forests and Excise Department.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD, in charge of the Department of Public Health and Local Self-Government.

The Hon'ble Mr. PULIN BEHARY MULLICK, in charge of the Publicity Department.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL, in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Department.

BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SPEAKER.

The Hon'ble MR. SYED NAUSHER ALI.

DEPUTY SPEAKER.

SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY, Esq.

SECRETARY.

K. ALI AIZAL, Esq., Barrister-at-law.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS.

A

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md. [Narayanganj East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hafiz, Md Mirza [Tangail West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hafiz Mia, Mr. [Kurigram South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. [Khulna (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi [Mymensingh West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md. [Munshiganj (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hamid, Mr A M. [Pabna West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi [Kishoreganj North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Jabbar, Maulvi. [Dinajpur Central East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Jabbar Palwan, Mr. Md. [Jamalpur North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Kader, Mr. [Patuakhali South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Karim, Mr. [Jamalpur *cum* Muktagacha (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi. [Manikganj West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Majid, Maulvi. [Mymensingh North (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed. [Noakhali South (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr. [Nadia East (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr. [Bakarganj West (Muhammadan).]
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi. [Mymensingh East (Muhammadan).]
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr. [Serajganj North (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M. [24-Parganas North-East (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr. (Muslim Chamber of Commerce.)
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md. [Birbhum (Muhammadan).]

Abdur Raschid Mahmood, Mr. [Serajganj North (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. [Howrah (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah. [Rangpur South (Muhammadan).]
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi. [Feni (Muhammadan).]
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md. [Dacca North Central (Muhammadan).]
Abidur Reza Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Chandpur West (Muhammadan).]
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi. [Gaibandha North (Muhammadan).]
Abul Fazl, Mr. Muhammad. [Madaripur West (Muhammadan).]
Abul Hashim, Maulvi. [Burdwan (Muhammadan).]
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr. [Netrokona North (Muhammadan).]
Abul Masud, Maulvi Kazi. [Nator (Muhammadan).]
Abul Quasem, Maulvi. [Hooghly (Muhammadan).]
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh. (Dacca Landholders.)
Aftab Ali, Mr. (Water Transport Trade Union.)
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana. [Jhenidah (Muhammadan).]
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi. [Goalundo (Muhammadan).]
Ahmed Hosain, Mr. [Gaibandha South (Muhammadan).]
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed. [Noakhali South (Muhammadan).]
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Midnapore (Muhammadan).]
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Noakhali Central (Muhammadan).]
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md. [Rajshahi South (Muhammadan).]
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md. [Chittagong South (Muhammadan).]
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Tippera Central (Muhammadan).]
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Manikganj East (Muhammadan).]
Azhar Ali, Maulvi. [Pabna East (Muhammadan).]
Vacant. [Nadia West (Muhammadan).]

B

Badrudduja, Mr. Syed. [Berhampore (Muhammadan).]
Banerjee, Mr. Pramatha Nath. [Burdwan North-West (General).]
Banerjee, Mr. Sibnath. [Howrah (Registered Factories).]
Banerjee, Dr. Suresh Chandra. [Calcutta and Suburbs (Registered Factories).]
Banerji, Mr. P. [24-Parganas North-West (General).]
Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya. [Rajshahi (General).]
Barat Ali, Mr. Mohammad. [Serajganj Central (Muhammadan).]
Barma, the Hon'ble Mr. Premhari. [Dinajpur (General).]
Barma, Mr. Puspajit. [Rangpur (General).]
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad. [Dinajpur (General).]
Barman, Mr. Upendra Nath. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]

Basu, Mr. Jatindra Nath. [Calcutta North (General).]
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar. [Calcutta East (General).]
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B. (Anglo-Indian Constituency.)
Bhowmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra. [Midnapore East (General).]
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah (European).]
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan. [Nadia (General).]
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal. [Jessore (General).]
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath. [Faridpur (General).]
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra. [Calcutta South (General).]

C

Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath [Rangpur (General).]
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan. [Bogra *cum* Pabna (General).]
Chattopadhyay, Mr. Haripada. [Nadia (General)]
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath. [24-Parganas Municipal (General).]
Chippendale, Mr. J. W. (Anglo-Indian)
Clark, Mr. I. A. [Burdwan Division (European).]

D

Das, Babu Radha Nath [Hooghly North-East (General).]
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra [24-Parganas North-West (General).]
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan. [Murshidabad (General).]
Das, Mr. Monomohan [Mymensingh East (General)]
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath. [Birbhum (General)]
Das Gupta, Babu Khagendra Nath [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]
Das Gupta, Dr J M. [Calcutta Central (General).]
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath. [Bakarganj South-West (General).]
Datta, Mr. Dhirendra Nath. [Tippera (General).]
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath. [Jhargram *cum* Ghatal (General).]
Dutt, Mr. Sukumar. [Hooghly South-West (General).]
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira. [Calcutta General (Women).]
Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu. [Barrackpore (Registered Factories).]

E

Edbar, Mr. Upendranath. [Bakarganj South-West (General).]
Emdadul Haque, Kazi. [Kurigram North (Muhammadan).]

F

Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M. [Jangipur (Muhammadan).]
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum. [Dacca (Muhammadan) Women.]
Fazlul Huq, Mr. A. K. [Patuakhali North (Muhammadan).]
Fazlul Qadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Chittagong North-West (Muhammadan).]
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. [Jamalpur East (Muhammadan).]
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca University.)

G

Ganguly, Mr. Pratul Chandra. [East Bengal Municipal (General).]
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna. [Jessore (General).]
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Jamalpur West (Muhammadan).]
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E. [Bengal Chamber of Commerce.]
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi. [Dinajpur Central West (Muhammadan).]
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed. [Ramganj *cum* Raipur (Muhammadan).]
Gomes, Mr. R. A. [Dacca Division (Indian Christian).]
Goswami, the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra. [Burdwan Division North Municipal (General).]
Griffiths, Mr. C. (Anglo-Indian.)
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra. [Calcutta South Central (General).]
Gupta, Mr. J. N. [Railway Trade Union (Labour).]
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh. [Darjeeling (General).]
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Al-Hadj. [Madaripur East (Muhammadan).]

H

Habibullah, Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca. [Dacca Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi. [Thakurgaon (Muhammadan).]
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib [Kishoreganj East (Muhammadan).]
Hamilton, Mr. K. A. (Calcutta Trades Association.)
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed. [Tangail North (Muhammadan).]
Hasanuzzaman, Khan Sahib Maulvi Md. [Tippera South (Muhammadan).]
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Bakarganj North (Muhammadan).]
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E. [Calcutta (Muhammadan) Women.]
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Pirojpur South (Muhammadan).]
Haywood, Mr. Rogers. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Hendry, Mr. David. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F., O.B.E. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Hodge, Mr. H. R. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)

I

Idris Ahmed Mia, Mr. [Malda South (Muhammadan).]
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E. [Calcutta South (Muhammadan).]

J

Jalaluddin Ahmad, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Cox's Bazar (Muhammadan).]
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed. [Satkhira (Muhammadan).]

Jalan, Mr. I. D. [Calcutta West (General).]
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [24-Parganas South (Muhammadan).]
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi. [Chandpur East (Muhammadan).]

K

Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Netrokona South (Muhammadan).]
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed. [Murshidabad South-West (Muhammadan).]
Kennedy, Mr. I. G. (Indian Jute Mills Association.)
Khaitan, Mr. Debi Prosad. (Indian Chamber of Commerce.)
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall. [Midnapore Central (General).]
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra. [Malda (General).]
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath. [Dinajpur (General).]

L

Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh [North Bengal Municipal (General).]
Leisk, Mr. John. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]

M

MacGregor, Mr. G. G (Indian Tea Association.)
MacPherson, Mr G. P. [Rajshahi Division (European).]
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. [Bogra North (Muhammadan).]
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi. [Tippera North (Muhammadan).]
Maguire, Mr. L. T. (Anglo-Indian.)
Mahtab, Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Uday Chand, of Burdwan. [Burdwan Central (General).]
Maiti, Mr. Nikunja Behari. [Midnapore South-East (General).]
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar. [Burdwan Central (General).]
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova. [Dacca (General) Women.]
Majumdar, Babu Jnanendra Chandra. [Mymensingh East Rural (General).]
Mal, Mr. Iswar Chandra. [Midnapore South-West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal. [Mymensingh West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari. [Burdwan North-West (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra. [Faridpur (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra. [Tippera (General).]
Mandal, the Hon'ble Mr. Jogendra Nath. [Bakarganj North-East (General).]
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad. [Midnapore Central (General).]
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi. [Rajshahi North (Muhammadan).]
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md. [Chittagong South Central (Muhammadan).]
Maqbul Hosain, Mr. [Tippera North-East (Muhammadan).]

Masud Ali Khan Panni, Al-Hadj Maulvi. [Tangail South (Muhammadan).]
Miles, Mr. C. W. (Indian Tea Association.)
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur. [Bogra West (Muhammadan).]
Mohsin Ali, Mr. Md. [Meherpur (Muhammadan).]
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad. (Calcutta University.)
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E. [Presidency Division (European).]
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M. [Rajshahi Central (Muhammadan).]
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md. [Bhola North (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed. [Pirojpur North (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi. [Noakhali North (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi. [Bogra South (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi. [Kishoreganj South (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed. [Bankura (Muhammadan).]
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. [Barrackpore Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Mukerjea, the Hon'ble Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E. (Burdwan Landholders' Constituency.)
Mukerji, Mr. Dhirendra Narayan. (Hooghly North-East.)
Mukherjee, Mr. B. [Colliery (Coal Mines) (Labour).]
Mukherji, Dr. H. C. [Calcutta *cum* Presidency Division (Indian Christian).]
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra. [Birbhum (General).]
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh. [Bankura West (General).]
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behari. [Khulna (General).]
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Pulin Behary. [Howrah (General).]
Musharruff Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Darjeeling (Muhammadan).]
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed. [Bagerhat (Muhammadan).]
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi. [Brahmanbaria North (Muhammadan).]

N

Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar. (Presidency Landholders.)
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K. [Brahmanbaria South (Muhammadan).]
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra. [24-Parganas South-East (General).]
Nausher Ali, the Hon'ble Mr. Syed. [Jessore Sadar (Muhammadan).]
Nazimuddin, the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E. [Calcutta North (Muhammadan).]
Nooruddin, Mr. K. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Norton, Mr. H. R., M.B.E. (Calcutta Trades Association.)

P

Pain, the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna. [Hooghly *cum* Howrah Municipal (General).]
Paul, Sir Hari Sankar. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.)

Poddar, Mr. Anandilall. (Marwari Association.)
Powell, Mr. J. A. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan. [Malda (General).]

R

Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L. [Rajshahi Central (Muhammadan).]
Raikut, Mr. Prasanna Deb. [Jalpaiguri *cum* Siliguri (General).]
Rajibuddin Taraftdar, Maulvi. [Bogra East (Muhammadan).]
Razimuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Tippera West (Muhammadan).]
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr. [Dacca South Central (Muhammadan).]
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra. [Mymensingh West (General).]
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy. [Dacca East (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kamalkrishna. [Bankura East (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar. [Dacca West (General).]
Roy, Mr. Kishori Pati. [Jhargram *cum* Ghatal (General).]
Vacant. (Chittagong Landholders.)
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath. [Howrah (General).]
Roy, Mr. Patiram. [Khulna (General).]
Roy Kumar Shib Shekhareswar. (Rajshahi Landholders.)

S

Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr. [Bakarganj South (Muhammadan).]
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji. [Rangpur North (Muhammadan).]
Sahabe Alum, Mr. Syed. [Dacca Central (Muhammadan).]
Salim, Mr. S. A. [Narayanganj North (Muhammadan).]
Sanaullah, Dr. [Chittagong North-East (Muhammadan).]
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha. [Presidency Division Municipal (General).]
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar. [Murshidabad (General).]
Sarker, Babu Madhusudan. [Bogra *cum* Pabna (General).]
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra. [Dacca East (General).]
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath. (Bengal National Chamber of Commerce.)
Sen, Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra. [24-Parganas South-East (General).]
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath. [Khulna (General).]
Sen Gupta, Mrs. Nelli. [Chittagong (General).]
Serajul Islam, Mr. [Bongaon (Muhammadan).]
Shahabuddin, the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E. [Narayanganj South (Muhammadan).]
Shahedali, Mr. [Matlabbazar (Muhammadan).]
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr. [Kusthia (Muhammadan).]
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr. [Gopalganj (Muhammadan).]
Shamsul Huda, Maulana. [Mymensingh South (Muhammadan).]
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath. [Rangpur (General).]
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan. [Bankura West (General).]
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda. [Bengal Dooars (Western) Tea Garden Labour.]
Skipwith, Mr. W. E. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G. [Darjeeling (European).]

Stark, Mr. A. F. [Calcutta and Suburbs (European).]
Steven, Mr. J. W. R. [Dacca (European).]
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. [24-Parganas Municipal (Muhammadan).]
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar. [Noakhali (General).]

T

Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr. [Faridpur West (Muhammadan).]
Thakur, Mr. Promatha Ranjan. [Faridpur (General).]
Thorman, Mr. C. M. [Chittagong Division (European).]
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji. [Bhola South (Muhammadan).]

W

Waliur Rahman, Maulvi. [Jessore East (Muhammadan).]
Walker, Mr. J. R. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E. (Indian Jute Mills Association.)
Whitehead, Mr. R. B. (Indian Mining Association.)
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E. (Bengal Chamber of Commerce.)

Y

Yousuf Mirza. [24-Parganas Central (Muhammadan).]
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr. [Faridpur East (Muhammadan).]

Z

Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi. [Malda North (Muhammadan).]
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A. [Hooghly *cum* Serampore (Registered Factories) Labour.]
Zillur Rahman Shah Chowdhury, Maulvi. [Balurghat (Muhammadan).]

THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS

Official Report of the Sixteenth Session.

Volume LXV.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 5th July, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 198 members.

Oath.

Mr. John Leisk took his oath of allegiance to the Crown.

Obituary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Ladies and gentlemen, before we proceed with the business of the House, it is my sad duty to refer to the death of three of our eminent countrymen, Mr. Allah Baksh, Dr. Sir Nilratan Sircar and Mr. B. C. Chatterjee.

The whole of India mourned the dastardly murder of Mr. Allah Baksh, the ex-Premier of Sind, at the early age of 45. An ardent lover of his country, his one goal in life was to serve India and for this purpose no sacrifice was too great for him

Dr. Sir Nilratan, a member of the old Bengal Legislative Council, died full of years and honours. His death removes an outstanding figure from the Medical world. A frank and lovable personality, he lived a noble life and his services to his country in various spheres of activities will be remembered by generations of his countrymen.

Mr. B. C. Chatterjee was the leader of the Nationalist Party in the old Bengal Legislative Council. A lawyer of repute, he was a staunch advocate of Hindu-Muslim Unity.

Just this morning I received the sad news of the death of one of our sitting members, Rai Bahadur Kshirode Chandra Roy, a member representing Chittagong Landholders' constituency. In him this Assembly has lost a valuable member, whose manners and temperament won the heart and admiration of all who knew him. He impressed all who came in contact with him by his courteous and amiable behaviour.

I feel it our duty to send messages of sympathy to the bereaved families and I hope members will signify their assent by rising in their seats.

(Members then rose in their seats.)

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, Secretary will take the necessary action.

Panel of Chairmen.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of rule 6 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, I nominate the following members of the Assembly to form a panel of four Chairmen for the ensuing session:—

(1) Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq,

(2) Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy,

(3) Mr. David Hendry, and

(4) Mr. Hem Chandra Naskar.

Unless otherwise arranged, the senior member among them present in the above order will preside over the deliberations of this Assembly in my absence and in the absence of the Deputy Speaker.

Committee on Petitions.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with the provisions of rule 82 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, I nominate the following seven members of the Assembly to form a Committee on petitions with the Deputy Speaker as Chairman:—

(1) Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee,

(2) Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu,

(3) Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmad,

(4) Mr. W. C. Wordsworth,

(5) Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz,

(6) Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty, and

(7) Mr. Dhananjoy Roy.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Grants of stipends to Scheduled Caste students in schools and colleges.

***2. Mr. MONOMOHAN DAS:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department aware—

(*i*) that the stipends granted during the current financial year to Scheduled Caste students in high schools and colleges out of the Scheduled Castes Education Fund have not been received by them regularly from the beginning of the year; and

(*ii*) that payment commenced when the year had far advanced?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the reasons for this delay; and

(*ii*) the officer or officers responsible for this delay?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): College stipends.—On account of the abnormal situation in the Province publication of last year's University Examination results was delayed and applications for college stipends were late. However every effort was made to expedite payment.

School stipends.—These are distributed by the Divisional Inspectors of Schools and awarded for one year with effect from 1st March. It is understood that there was no undue delay in disposal last year.

Award of stipends to Scheduled Caste students in schools.

***3. Mr. UPENDRA NATH EDBAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing

(*i*) the dates when stipends to Scheduled Caste school students were distributed in 1939, 1940, 1941 and 1942 by the Inspector of Schools, Bakarganj Range; and

(*ii*) the dates when the money was placed at the disposal during the period?

(*b*) Is it a fact that unusual delay is made every year in distributing the stipends to the school students of classes VII to X belonging to various Scheduled Castes?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) There was no unusual delay. Some time was necessary to get the statements from the schools and selected candidates.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 3.

Year.	Date of distribution of stipends.	Date of placing at disposal.
1939	Nil	Nil
1940	10-3-1940	15-1-1940.
1941	21-12-1941	23-9-1941.
1942	6-3-1943	2-12-1942.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: From answer (*b*) read with statement we see that money meant for 1942 was distributed in 1943. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether that was not unusual delay?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN Khan: That is a matter of opinion.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the session in high schools commences from the month of January each year?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: That is so.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to accept that when the money meant for the year 1942 was distributed in the year 1943 there was an unusual delay?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The honourable member will be pleased to see that the "date of placing at disposal" in 1942 was 2nd December, 1942, and the amount was distributed on 6th March, 1943. Therefore although there has been a delay of several months the delay is not more than what occurred in the year 1940, for example.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: We find from the statement that money meant for 1942 was distributed in the year 1943. Is that not unusual delay of more than one year?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is only an argument. You can see from the statement itself when the money was spent. Therefore that question does not arise.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: In view of the complaints that have come up before the House, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of looking into this matter personally and see that no delay occurs in the matter of granting and distributing stipends.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Yes, Sir.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what has been done with regard to the statement in the appropriation accounts by the Public Accounts Committee that Rs. 2 lakhs has been left unspent?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise out of the present question.

Number of Sub-Inspectors of Schools in Dacca district.

***4. Babu LAKSHMI NARAYAN BISWAS:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the present number of Sub-Inspectors of Schools in Dacca district; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Muslims,

(2) Caste Hindus, and

(3) Scheduled Castes?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the Scheduled Caste Sub-Inspector of Schools in Dacca district was transferred to Mymensingh district; and

(*ii*) that a Muslim Sub-Inspector of Dewanganj Circle in Mymensingh district was transferred to Dacca?

(c) If the answer to (a) (ii) (3) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of posting one at an early date?

(d) Is it a fact—

(i) that the official headquarters of the Sub-Inspector of Schools, Lohajang Circle, is at Lohajang; and

(ii) that the said Sub-Inspector of Schools resides at Narayanganj?

(e) If the answer to (d) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (a) (i) 18.

(ii) (1) Muslims 13.

(2) Caste Hindus 5.

(3) Scheduled Castes nil.

(b) Yes, on administrative grounds.

(c) One will be posted when available.

(d) (i) Yes.

(ii) No.

(e) Does not arise.

Bengal Tenancy Act Muharrirs in Registration Department.

*5. **Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(a) how many Bengal Tenancy Act muharrirs were there in registration offices in Bengal in 1937;

(b) what was the total number of registration and notices filed under sections 12, 18 and 26C of the Bengal Tenancy Act in—

(1) 1937, and

(2) 1942;

(c) at what rate the Bengal Tenancy Act muharrirs were paid for;

(d) what was the total expenditure on this account in 1937-38;

(e) since when the services of Bengal Tenancy Act muharrirs were abolished and how their work is being done;

(f) what was the total process fee realised in court-fee stamps in 1937 and 1942; and

(g) what percentage of the income from process fees has been spent in the Registration Department for doing the work under the Bengal Tenancy Act in 1937-38 and 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (a) The figures cannot be supplied without making a reference to every district in the Province, an expenditure of time and labour which would not be justified.

		1937.	1942.
(b) Number of registrations	...	400,537	964,596
Number of notices	...	1,105,183	2,475,063

(c) At Rs.30 per mensem at Sadar and Sadar joint offices and at Rs.25 at mufassal offices subject to the disposal of a minimum of 1,000 notices. Before July, 1939, the muharrirs used to be paid at annas 4 per tenancy.

(d) Rs.48,932.

(e) The services of the muharrirs have not been dispensed with.

(f) 1937—Rs.3,73,498.
1942—Rs.7,73,799.

(g) 1937—27 per cent.
1942—8 per cent.

These percentages represent the expenditure incurred under the heads "Bengal Tenancy Act Establishment" and "Bengal Tenancy Act Contingencies" of the Registration Budget There is besides expenditure such as proportionate cost of supervision, house rent, office establishment, forms, stationery, etc., incurred under other heads of expenditure of the Registration Budget. There are moreover no Bengal Tenancy Act muharrirs except at the Sadar offices and some big offices in the interior. The work is managed in other offices by the members of the general establishment and expenditure is debited to other heads. The low percentage of 1942 is due to the fact that from 1941, the notices are being served through the Collectorate instead of through the post by the Registering Officers direct. In many places collectors have to incur additional cost of boat hire and similar expenditure.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the work that is being done as additional work is done by the permanent establishment or by a temporary establishment?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I want notice.

Guru Training admission test examination in Tippera.

***6. Maulvi ABDUL WAHED:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(a) who were the examiners of the last Guru Training admission test examination in the district of Tippera;

(b) how many candidates appeared in the said examination;

(c) the names of the candidates coming out successful in the examination;

(d) whether any non-teacher was allowed to appear in the examination;

(e) the marks obtained by the candidates;

(f) whether examination papers are preserved;

(g) in what press the questions for the last said examination were printed; and

(h) whether it is a fact that the questions were out before the examination was held?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) Two Head Masters of Primary Training Schools and two teachers in charge of Primary Training Centres of the district of Tippera.

(*b*) Five hundred and fifty candidates.

(*c*) A statement giving the information is laid on the Library Table.

(*d*) No.

(*e*) A statement giving the information is laid on the Library Table.

(*f*) Yes.

(*g*) In the "Nazeria Press", Comilla.

(*h*) No.

Shelters for the passers-by.

*7. **Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA CANGULI:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any arrangements have been made for the shelters of the passers-by during air raids over Calcutta, Chittagong and Feni; and

(*b*) whether any steps have been taken for providing the labourers, *bustee* dwellers and other poor peoples of Calcutta, Chittagong and Feni with shelters during air raids?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): Yes.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House what classes of shelter have been constructed at Chittagong and Feni?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: Slit trenches, parabolic trenches and buildings.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to how many persons approximately can be accommodated in the shelters in Calcutta?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: In Calcutta the shelters can accommodate 222,585 persons.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the condition of the slit trenches in Calcutta after the rains and what improvement do Government propose to make on them?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: It is open to every member to go and see for himself.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order, Sir? Can the Hon'ble Minister in answering a question say that the honourable member should go and see for himself? Can he run away from answering the question in this way?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: What I said was that it was open to the honourable member to see for himself.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I have your ruling on my point of order, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, it is well-known to this House that the Speaker has got no authority to compel a Minister to answer a question in a particular way. Of course, I feel that the way in which the answer has been given is not quite proper.

The Hon'ble Mr. BARODA PROSANNA PAIN: Sir, then I must ask for notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, an answer was given to my first question but to my positive question as to whether any improvement has been made by Government——

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister has replied that he wants notice.

Re-excavation of the silting up portion of Satkhira khal.

***8. Mr. PATIRAM ROY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware—

(*i*) that there is a canal by the town of Satkhira (Khulna),

(*ii*) that the dead and dying river Nowkhali was excavated in the year 1938 and joined with the Satkhira *khal* at Thanaghata;

(*iii*) that the Satkhira Canal was being silted up till the year 1939;

(*iv*) that the silt of the Satkhira *khal* from Thanaghata to Marishachap was cleared up in the year 1939;

(*v*) that a canal was dug so as to join the Sonai and the Nowkhali *khal* together in the year 1941;

(*vi*) that the flow-tide of the Satkhira *khal* coming from the river Marishachap would ingress up to some place beyond Thanaghata till excavation of the Nowkhali;

(*vii*) that after excavation of the Nowkhali the flow-tide of Satkhira *khal* has been ingressing into the Nowkhali *khal*.

(*viii*) that after excavation of the Satkhira *khal* and Nowkhali *khal* the abandoned portion of the Satkhira *khal*, viz., Thanaghata to Khejurdangi, is being silted up;

(*ix*) that a large number of people of the Satkhira subdivision has been put to difficulty on account of silting up of the abandoned portion of the Satkhira *khal*; and

(*x*) that it becomes unnavigable during the period of the first 3 hours of flow-tide and last 3 hours of the ebb-tide?

(*b*) If the answers to (*a*) are in the affirmative, are the Government considering the desirability of excavating the said abandoned portion of the Satkhira *khal*?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: (*a*) (*i*) to (*vii*) and (*x*) Yes.

(*viii*) The channel from Thanaghata to Khejurdangi is being silted up from a long time due to the meeting of tides from both ends.

(*ix*) Yes. This is a short navigable route between the Satkhira *khal* and the Betna river.

(*b*) The matter will be investigated.

If, on investigation, the Department is satisfied about the desirability of excavating it Government will take necessary steps.

Establishment of the Camouflage Department.

***9. Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*a*) when the Camouflage Department has been established in this Province;

(*b*) (1) the names of the officers, (2) their qualifications and designations, and (3) salary drawn by each of them, rank by rank; and

(*c*) (1) the number of Burma evacuees working in this Department, (2) their names, (3) salary drawn here, and (4) salary last drawn at Burma?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: (*a*) The 21st November, 1941.

(*b*) and (*c*) Statements are laid on the Table

Statements referred to in reply to clauses (b) and (c) of starred question No. 9.

STATEMENT No. I.

Name of the Officer.	Qualifications and designation.	Salary drawn by each, rank by rank.
Mr. T. Edmondson, O B E	A M S A, F I A A, permanent Government Architect, Bengal. Regional Camouflage Officer, Bengal.	Draws pay in the scale of his substantive post, viz., Government Architect, Bengal.
Mrs. H. M. Edmondson	Studied Art in England for five years, obtained scholarship from the Art School at Harrogate to the Royal College of Art where she studied architecture. Deputy Regional Camouflage Officer, Bengal.	Rs.600 per mensem *plus* Rs 80 per mensem (motor car allowance).
Mr. H. E. B. Hartley .	A.I.E E (England). Permanent Electrical Executive Engineer. Deputy Regional Camouflage Officer, Bengal	Draws pay in the scale of his substantive post, viz., Electrical Executive Engineer, *plus* Rs.75 per mensem (motor car allowance).
Mr. M. K. Ghosh ..	B.Sc. (Eng) .. Assistant Camouflage Officer	Rs.350 per mensem *plus* Rs 50 per mensem (motor car allowance).
Mr. Azimuddin Ahmed ..	B.E. . Assistant Camouflage Officer.	Rs 200 per mensem *plus* Rs.50 per mensem (motor car allowance).

STATEMENT No. II.

Number of Burma evacuees working in the Camouflage Department.	Name.	Salary drawn here.	Last salary drawn at Burma.
One ..	Mr. M. K. Ghosh, B.Sc. (Eng.).	Rs.350 per mensem *plus* Rs.50 per mensem (motor car allowance).	Rs.350 per mensem *plus* Rs.50 per mensem (motor car allowance).

Amount drawn by M.L.As. for Jute and other propaganda works from the Provincial revenues.

***10. Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state whether any member or members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly has or have drawn any amount from the Provincial revenues from 1st April, 1942, to the 28th February, 1943, towards—

(*i*) Jute Propaganda works;

(*ii*) Grow More Food Campaign; and

(*iii*) Communal Harmony Propaganda?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state separately the amount drawn by each of the members?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami): (*a*) No member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly has drawn anything from Provincial revenues for any of the items mentioned in the question.

(*b*) Does not arise

Uniformity of weights in Rangpur district.

***11. Mr. KSHETRA NATH SINGHA:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department aware that three kinds of weights, namely, 80, 90 and 60 tolas per seer, are used in shops, bazars, etc., in the district of Rangpur?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of introducing standard weight in the particular locality for the benefit of the public?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take in the matter?

(*d*) Do the Government contemplate introducing a Bill in the ensuing session of the Assembly for the purpose?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENTS (the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja Shahabuddin): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) to (*d*) Although the Standards of Weight Act, 1939, framed by the Central Government has been in force with effect from the 1st July, 1942, its enforcement in this Province is pending initiation of a provincial legislation.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when does he propose to bring the initiation of a provincial legislation?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I intend to take all possible steps to bring a legislation next session.

Suspension of the realisation of agricultural loans within Natore subdivision.

***12. Kazi ABUL MASUD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that due to failure of crops and economic distress the affected people of Natore subdivision submitted a number of petitions requesting the local authority to stop realisation of agricultural loans?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of such petitions filed;

(*ii*) whether any enquiry has been made into the matter; and

(*iii*) whether any register or record has been maintained in the District office or in the Subdivisional office to entertain these petitions and to enter the result thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) 48.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) Yes, a register is maintained.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken by the Government, whether there has been a suspension of the realisation of agricultural loan?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Yes, after enquiry suspension has been made in deserving cases.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of money, the realisation of which has been suspended?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Rs. 4,085.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how agricultural loans are given?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Appointment of Assistant Engineers in Communications and Works Department.

1. **Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware—

(*i*) that four posts of Assistant Engineers in the Communications and Buildings Branch of the Communications and Works Department, Government of Bengal, were advertised in the *Calcutta Gazette*, November 13, of 1941; and

(*ii*) that two of these posts were reserved for Muslim candidates?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) how many Muslim candidates applied for the posts;

(*ii*) how many of them had the minimum requisite qualifications; and

(*iii*) whether both the posts reserved for the Muslims were filled up by the Muslim candidates?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*iii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Three.

(*ii*) Two.

(*iii*) No. The candidates who applied were not recommended by the Public Service Commission. The vacancies were again advertised.

(*c*) Out of the two candidates eligible for appointment, one was not interviewed by the Commission as he did not file a Treasury chalan with his application and the other, in the opinion of the Commission, was not only below the standard of intelligence required for appointment to the post but also below the standard of engineering knowledge required. Subsequently, these two posts were combined with two other posts, also reserved for Muslims, and the Public Service Commission have recommended four Muslim candidates for these four posts. Two of them have joined their posts but the other two candidates have not yet been released from their present employment to join their posts under this Government.

Number of Middle English Schools recognised in Mymensingh and Dacca.

2. **Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing separately the present number of—

(*i*) recognised middle English schools;

(*ii*) Government aided middle English schools;

(*iii*) District Board aided middle English schools; and

(*iv*) unrecognised middle English schools in the districts of (1) Dacca, and (2) Mymensingh?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps he proposes to take for the spread of education amongst the masses?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of increasing the number of Government aided middle English schools in the district of Mymensingh from the coming financial year of 1943-44 for the purpose?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) Education is being spread among the masses by the introduction of the Free Primary Education Scheme and by the establishment of a number of adult schools.

(*c*) Yes, as far as funds permit.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of unstarred question No. 2.

	Dacca.	Mymensingh.
(*i*) Recognised middle English schools ..	121	185
(*ii*) Government aided middle English schools	46	39
(*iii*) District Board aided middle English schools	75	93
(*iv*) Unrecognised middle English schools in the district of (1) Dacca, and (2) Mymensingh	15	Nil

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: In view of the fact that Government grant has been given to a much less number of schools in the district of Mymensingh, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to increase the number of Government-aided schools in that district?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Yes, Sir, the matter will be looked into.

Reconstitution of the next Governing Body of the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca.

3. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state when the next Governing Body of the Ahsanullah School of Engineering, Dacca, would be reconstituted?

(*b*) Is it a fact that no Scheduled Caste member has ever been represented in the said Board?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of securing adequate representation of Scheduled Caste candidates on that body?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) In June, 1944.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The question will be considered at the time of the next constitution of the Governing Body.

Shortage of small coins.

4. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware—

(*i*) that there is acute shortage of small coins in the Province; and

(*ii*) that the small trade and commerce have been put to much difficulties due to such shortage of small coins?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, Government has taken in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. KHWAJA SHAHABUDDIN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) As "Currency, coinage and legal tender" is a Central subject, the matter is one for the Central Government to consider. The Provincial Government are, however, taking action against hoarding of small coins which appears to be one of the causes of the shortage.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Provincial Government have taken any action except "taking action against hoarding of small coins which appears to be one of the causes of the shortage"?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID (Parliamentary Secretary): Government have issued instructions to all District Officers——

Point of Order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir I find the question being replied to by one who is not a responsible Minister of the Government In connection with recent Habeas Corpus petitions before the High Court the Advocate-General of the Province argued or sought to argue, though it was not accepted by the Court, that the statements made by Ministers in reply to questions are not necessarily statements of Government and he made a difference between a statement made by a Minister on behalf of the Government and by a member of the House I presume, Sir, that when an ordinary member of the House, who has no responsibility for the administration of Government and is not functioning for and on behalf of Government, replies, the House cannot possibly be satisfied with the reply as being a reply of the Government. In the circumstances I humbly submit to you, Sir, that it would not be in order for any person other than one who speaks on behalf of Government to reply to a question put in the House unless it is a question directed to a private member. There may be questions under the rules directed to private members for eliciting information. I submit, Sir, that Whips or Parliamentary Secretaries come under the category of private members and they can reply to questions put to private members, but when questions are put seeking some information from Government, it is only somebody responsible for the administration of Government who should come forward with a reply if the House is to be satisfied with that reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, so far as the first part of your statement is concerned, namely, what argument was advanced by the Advocate-General or not and whether it was accepted or not, we have nothing to do with it here. But the question is whether a Parliamentary Secretary should be allowed to answer questions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On behalf of Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, on behalf of Government. That is the point for consideration here. The practice, as far as I know, prevalent in this House has been that Parliamentary Secretaries have been allowed to answer questions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir, only one Parliamentary Secretary was allowed once in the absence of the Minister in charge.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am referring to that In fact, there has been such an occasion and no exception to it, so far as I remember, was taken by anybody.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That was in the absence of the Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: You mean to say that in the absence of the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary will be competent but when the Minister is present, he will not be

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My argument is that in the absence even of the Minister the Parliamentary Secretary is not competent, but there may be some authority given to that Parliamentary Secretary in his absence to speak on behalf of Government that may be argued, which we do not know. But, Sir, in the presence of the Minister in charge there cannot be the slightest justification for anybody and everybody putting up some kind of defence on behalf of Government and there is no provision in the Rules for anybody other than the Minister to reply. The Rules do not empower anybody else. We are to be guided by the present rules.

Mr. SPEAKER: Rule 31 says: "Questions shall be put and answers given in such manner as the Speaker may determine". I do not know if any regulation has been made

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, Sir, that is in Appendix VI. You will find that on pages 5-6 of the Speaker's Regulations. That disposes of your enquiry regarding this matter

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: In this connection, may I submit for your information——

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I add one word in connection with my point of order This point of order is not one which is only frivolously raised to prevent somebody from speaking. I have raised it on a most important constitutional issue and I submit that if this point of order

is accepted by you—as I think in your wisdom you will—then Parliamentary Secretaries will have absolutely no job and there will be no justification for payment of salaries to them. That will be a very interesting situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a different point.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, may I put in a supplementary argument in support of the point of order? I will invite your attention to page 5 of the Speaker's Regulations and there is Rule 4: "At question-time the Secretary shall in the case of a question which has to be answered orally specify the serial number of the question and forthwith call upon the Minister in charge to reply." Sir, here is a specific reference to the Minister in charge and not to any Parliamentary Secretary. The Rules do not contemplate any answers being offered by the Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. A. F. STARK: May I say something, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. In Rule 1 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, there is the definition of the word "Minister". "Minister" means a Member of the Council of Ministers, and includes any member to whom such Minister may delegate any function assigned to him under these rules.

Therefore if any authority has been delegated to the honourable member who was answering it, it is perfectly in order that he replies to this question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may we then enquire if you had any delegation notified to you? In that case the person delegating and the person delegated cannot both simultaneously function—either one or the other should function.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter of argument.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: I would like to draw your attention to this point. A Minister can delegate some powers to some members, but it is for consideration whether it is desirable or advisable or permissible to do so when the Minister himself is present here. He may have delegated his powers to somebody else to answer this question perhaps to avoid some unpleasantness or some responsibility——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. You are arguing. The rules are clear on this point. There may be a hundred and one reasons which may induce the Minister in charge to delegate some part of his duties to a Parliamentary Secretary. We cannot at least I cannot sitting here—enquire as to what those reasons are. If you feel aggrieved, you have got a proper remedy. All that is necessary for me to ascertain at this stage is whether Mr. Abdul Majid has got the authority to reply to this question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Delegation cannot be presumed by construction. Have you, Mr. Speaker, made any rules authorising the Parliamentary Secretary to reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a rule made by this House.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, as I was submitting in all the provinces where Parliamentary Secretaries have been appointed, the practice is that most of the questions are answered by Parliamentary Secretaries.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The rules are different.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Regarding the information you wanted to know, Sir, the necessary rules have been framed defining the duties of Parliamentary Secretaries and one of the duties is answering questions and Mr. Abdul Majid who has been attached to the Commerce and Labour Department has the necessary authority from me to answer this question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Written or unwritten?

Mr. SPEAKER: That does not matter. I take it that he has been delegated the power to answer the question. I think he can answer it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Another point of order, Sir. The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Commerce and Labour has just now mentioned to you that some rules have been framed defining the duties and powers of Parliamentary Secretaries and it is one of such rules under which they are to answer questions. My point of order is that in the absence of a copy of such rules being supplied to the members, and in particular to the Speaker, will the Speaker take any cognisance of the existence of some rule or rules contrary to the rules of the Assembly? For the purpose of the Assembly work, the rules are different. There may be some rules relating to internal administration of the office of Minister, but we are not concerned with the same. Our rules must be so modified with the consent of the House, if necessary, as will permit answers to be received from Parliamentary Secretaries. In the absence of rules to that effect, we have to depend upon rules as they stand now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, you have dealt with the point at very great length and you have made your point perfectly clear. But I think that you could also understand that when the Hon'ble Minister was answering he was using somewhat loose language about the framing of rules. The real question is whether he had delegated the authority to the honourable member Mr. Abdul Majid. That is why I myself put a question to him and he replied that authority had been delegated.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: But won't you examine the rules?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: So far as this House is concerned, can we then be justified in presuming that replies given by Parliamentary Secretaries also commit the Government in the same way as the replies of Hon'ble Ministers-in-charge of the departments concerned? Otherwise it is no use proceeding.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: When delegating power is there any limit to such delegation by Ministers?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. That question does not arise. It is a simple fact and a simple issue. The issue is whether or not authority has been delegated by the Hon'ble Minister to Mr. Syed Abdul Majid to answer questions, and the answer of the Hon'ble Minister is that it has been delegated and I hope I have got to accept that as well as the House have got to accept that.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Sir, I want to know whether there was any document regarding this delegation.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: What are the rules which allow a Minister to delegate authority?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. There should not be any discussion about this matter. I have given my ruling. The Hon'ble Minister has stated categorically that authority has been delegated. That is enough for me and for this House and I have allowed Mr. Abdul Majid to answer questions.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: I would like to know whether this authority is for the purpose of this question only or it is a general delegation.

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: On a point of information, Sir. I would like to be informed by the Hon'ble Ministers through you, Sir, whether the Hon'ble Ministers in a body have delegated their powers to the Parliamentary Secretaries in a body by a document or by a power of attorney.

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise

Mr. Majid, if you remember the last question, will you please answer it?

Further supplementaries to unstarred question No. 4.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Yes, Sir. Government had issued necessary instructions to all District Officers for prosecution of persons found in possession of excess small coins and they have further been directed to give the widest possible publicity that the informants should be handsomely rewarded.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Sir, my question was whether Government have taken any other action excepting prosecution.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: No.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister or any person whom he may have authorised in this respect be pleased to state whether Government have represented or consider the desirability of representing to the Government of India that immediate steps should be taken to meet the coin shortage?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the statement that hoarders and profiteers regarding coins are to be proceeded against by the local officials and that circulars have been sent to District Officers to that effect, will the honourable member in charge at the present moment state if he is aware that in a case arising out of such action the Allahabad High Court decided that no such action was tenable in the absence of a clear definition of such "hoarding"?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: I am not aware of that.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the honourable member be pleased to state what constitutes "hoard" and whether any hoard has since been unearthed?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Yes, Sir. Some hoards were unearthed, prosecutions had been started and some persons convicted.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have answered one part of the question. He wants to know what constitutes a "hoard".

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: There is no definition of "hoarding", but it depends more or less upon the judgment of the particular officer who tries the case.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: I could not follow his answer. My question was: what constitutes a "hoard".

Mr. SPEAKER: He has given an answer. It may not be satisfactory to you, but that is his answer.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the honourable member please tell the House as to what is the standard according to which prosecution will be started before the Court decides regarding hoards?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: That is one keeps small coins more than one's personal or business requirements.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: Will the honourable member please state if hoarding is not defined, how are they going to prosecute—on what basis? How is prosecution to be started?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: I have already answered the question.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether as a result of these prosecutions any amount of small coins has been released and, if so, what is that amount and whether that amount has to any extent relieved the situation?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Not very much; and I cannot give the amount.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: How is a person to know whether he is doing a lawful act in doing his business regarding small coins when there is no definition of the word "hoarding"?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: As much as will be required for his business—that is the amount which he can keep.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: How is that necessity to be determined and on what basis and who will determine it?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed a number of supplementary questions on this point and it appears to me that the matter has been made absolutely clear, and I hope there will be no need for further supplementary questions.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: The answer says that hoarding is one of the causes. May I know what are the other causes?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: That is due to the scarcity and high price of the metal.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is the honourable member in order in replying that way?

Mr. SPEAKER: You are an old parliamentarian Mr. Biswas, and I hope you will not take up the time of the House by speaking in that way.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE: Will the honourable member be pleased to inform the House what publicity has been given to the rewards offered for information about hoards and hoarders?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: I want notice

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In view of the difficulties revealed in questions and answers about ascertaining what is hoard and about the uncertain position arising therefrom, do not the Government think it desirable to define hoarding?

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Government will of course consider the question whether hoard has to be further defined.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Are honourable members of the Government not aware that the Hon'ble Sir Jeremy Raisman, declared on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly that in the year 1942 small coins were minted far in excess of the quantity minted in the previous year? In view of that I want to know whether the honourable member is correct when he answered that it was owing to the scarcity and high price of the metal.

(No answer.)

Filling up of posts of Examiners of Accounts in office of Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Bengal.

5. Maulana MD. MANIRUZZAMAN ISLAMABADI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state whether the two posts of Examiners of Accounts reserved for the Muslims in the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Bengal, have yet been filled up?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number; and

(*ii*) the academic qualifications of the Muslim candidates who applied for the post?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the measures Government have taken to fill up the posts by Muslim candidates?

The Hon'ble Mr. KHWAJA SHAHABUDDIN: (*a*) No

(*b*) (*i*) 27.

(*ii*) M.Com. 4 and B.Com. 23.

(*c*) Some of the applicants have been interviewed and examined and a preliminary selection has been made Final selection has been delayed as certain recommendations of the Registrar, Joint Stock Companies, on the question of qualification are under the consideration of Government.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who has made the preliminary selection?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The Registrar of the Joint Stock Companies

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how does the question of recommendation of the Registrar, Joint Stock Companies, come in after the final selection is made on the question of qualifications?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I would like to take the House into my confidence and give the whole story about these appointments Eighteen posts were sanctioned by the Government of India as additional posts for the office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. Six of these posts were in the upper division and 12 in the lower division. The Government of Bengal decided that the Communal Ratio Rules should be applied to these appointments These appointments in the upper division comprised of—

1 Superintendent,

2 Local Examiners of Accounts, and

3 Upper Division assistants

The remaining 12 posts were typists and lower division clerks and these are going to be separately treated and the Communal Ratio Rules applied. As regards the posts in the upper division, 3 were filled up by promotion from the lower division of non-matric clerks, all Hindus. Still, there were left 3 posts. The Superintendent's post has been filled up by the head clerk of the office of the Electrical Engineer. So, the Bengal Government decided that the other 2 posts should go to the Muslims A memorial was submitted——

Mr. SPEAKER: Make it short, please.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, I shall make it very short. The memorial was submitted that this man who had been brought in was working as Superintendent and that as it would be very inconvenient for him to revert he might be allowed to continue in that post. To that I was told, my predecessor in office, and the ex-Chief Minister, agreed. Out of 6 appointments in the upper division 4 have gone to Hindus and the 2 Local Examiners of Accounts, it has been decided, should go to Muslims. Government fixed the qualifications for the Local Examiners of Accounts as B. Com. with a knowledge of advance accounting or M. Com. The Registrar of the Joint Stock Companies raised the objection and put in an advertisement not on the basis of qualifications fixed by the local Government but inserting certain higher qualifications although the qualifications suggested by the Government of Bengal sufficed for men appointed to the Income-tax Office drawing higher salaries and holding more responsible positions. The Government wanted that the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies should fill up these posts by Muslims. He protested and put in an appeal. The question of complaint is this.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the Hon'ble Minister is quite irrelevant.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We want to know the whole history.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is no reason for resentment from this side of the House or that. On this question, we are not formulating any policy. I have allowed the Hon'ble Minister to make a statement by way of explanation and I hope he would be as brief as possible.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Now, the position is this. The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies has put in an appeal to the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Commerce Department of the Government of India and that appeal is pending. Therefore, these posts are being held up.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is it a fact that the recommendations of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies regarding the minimum qualifications for the Examiner of Accounts were flouted by the Provincial Government and that qualifications lower than those suggested by the Registrar were desired to be put in by the local Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I have already explained that the local Government fixed the minimum qualification for these posts as B. Com. with advance accounting or M. Com. The Registrar of Joint Stock Companies did not agree and recommended some other qualifications.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the qualifications which the Registrar required? Is it the Accountancy qualification of G.D.A. or R.A. which he considers to be the minimum qualification laid down by the Government of India for the Local

Examiner of Accounts who will be entrusted with the duty of auditing the accounts of public companies or has he suggested anything of his own accord?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The local Government were satisfied that the qualifications suggested by them were quite reasonable.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have not got the reply to my question.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the reply he has given.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies has put in the same minimum qualifications which the Government of India have laid down for the auditors who are competent to audit accounts of firms, viz., G.D.A. or R.A., or if he has suggested anything absurd or anything beyond these?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: As far as I am aware nothing about the Government of India laying down minimum qualifications was raised.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: With regard to answer (c), I would like to have from the Hon'ble Minister not a long statement about policy and programme but a short reply on a point where he has said that preliminary selection has been made. Will he be pleased to inform the House on what basis this preliminary selection was made? Was it on personal consideration or on the question of merit and qualifications, pure and simple?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: A preliminary selection has been made by the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies. I hope this answer will disabuse the mind of my honourable friend that no question of personal consideration did come in.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the three posts which we have come to learn from the statement made were filled by non-matriculate Hindus went to persons possessing any Accountancy degree like the G.D.A or the R.A.?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. This is a question arising out of a question I have put, and my friend, Mr. Israil, will permit me to explain the position.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir When a member asks a supplementary question, is it open to another member to rise on a personal explanation in reference to that question?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Dr. Sanyal rose on a point of personal explanation and whether or not a personal explanation does arise in this connection is a matter for the decision of the Speaker. I have not yet decided whether I will allow him to make a personal explanation but it is always open to a member to rise on a personal explanation.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I have put the question and I want an answer.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: In the first place with regard to the three posts it was not necessary to see to Accountancy qualifications because they were posts of lower division clerks.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Is it a case where pure accountancy or auditing is essential?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: After full consideration Government decided that the qualifications, M. Com. and B. Com., are suitable for the purpose.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any difference in the nature of the work to be done by the four promotees to the posts mentioned in the question?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Of the four posts one is that of the Superintendent of the office and it is not included among those filled by non-matriculates The other three posts filled by non-matriculates were clerical posts. Two posts under question were of Local Examiner of Accounts and they were quite different.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the posts of Examiner of Accounts in the Income-tax Department of the Government of India require a minimum qualification which is much higher than B. Com. or M. Com.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not going to allow that question in view of the statement made by Mr Shahabuddin.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of the long history behind these appointments will the Government consider the desirability of placing all the facts before the Public Service Commission and obtain their recommendations?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Government do not consider that the Public Service Commission should be consulted

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of introducing a competitive examination amongst the Muslim candidates so that really deserving persons may get in?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: No question of holding a competitive examination did arise.

Appointments in various departments in Rangpur.

6. Mr. KSHETRANATH SINGHA: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(i) the number of officers appointed in 1942-43 in various departments under the Jute Regulation Scheme in the district of Rangpur; and

(ii) the number of them that are (1) Caste Hindus, (2) Muslims and (3) Scheduled Castes?

(*b*) Is it a fact that some applicants have entered the service under false representation of their being members belonging to Scheduled Castes?

(*c*) If so, what steps do the Government propose to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain): (*a*) Appointments of officers in the Jute Regulation Department are made on provincial basis and it is not therefore possible to furnish figures with reference to any particular district.

(*b*) and (*c*) I have no information in regard to any false representation; but I shall be glad to investigate any such case if duly reported to me.

Mr. MONMOHAN DAS: In reply to questions (*b*) and (*c*), the Hon'ble Minister says that he has no information in regard to any false representation but he will be glad to investigate any such case if duly reported to him. But I understand that there are a good many cases of such false representation. Now, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he thinks it desirable to make a general investigation into this matter?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I am not aware of any such false representation

Adjournment Motion.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I have now your permission to move my adjournment motion? I have given you notice of an adjournment motion on the fixation of raw jute prices, which runs thus:

"This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the fixation by the Indian Jute Mills Association with the concurrence of the Government of Bengal of maximum prices of raw jute for the coming season at Rs. 14 to Rs. 19 per maund delivered at the mills in utter disregard of the interests of the cultivators."

I have got your consent

Mr. SPEAKER: Is there any objection to the motion? It runs thus: "This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence——"

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, are you going to put the motion before the House? Is it in order?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have only given my consent. I think the practice is that after my consent has been given, it is read out to the House and then I ask the Government whether they have got anything to say with regard to this and whether it is in order or not. If then I see that it is in order, then of course the question of putting it arises. That is the procedure that is generally followed and I am going to follow that procedure. The motion runs thus:

"This Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the fixation by the Indian Jute Mills Association with the concurrence of the Government of Bengal of maximum prices of raw jute for the coming season at Rs. 14 to Rs. 19 per maund delivered at the mill in utter disregard of the interest of the cultivators."

I would like to know if Sir Nazimuddin or the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge has anything to say with regard to this motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, I submit that this adjournment motion is based absolutely on wrong facts. The Government is not directly concerned with this matter: it is purely a matter between the Jute Mills themselves who have decided it. And this statement "with the concurrence of the Government"—I do not use a strong word—is not correct. The latter statement also that a consultation is going on with the Government of Bengal for the introduction of an Ordinance fixing the maximum price—I again say, I do not deliberately use a strong word—has absolutely no substance in it. Therefore the matter has become absolutely a matter in which the Government has no concern or any responsibility.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is it not a fact that the Government of Bengal have agreed with the Jute Mills Association in fixing the price of jute?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I say emphatically "No".

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is it not a fact that the Government of Bengal have agreed to the Jute Mills Association fixing the price?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Emphatically no.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I would not like to use any strong language as my friend has tried to do. We have often got to take things as they are on facts that are coming from responsible persons in trade and the facts that have come through certain members of the Indian Jute Mills Association are that they had discussions with the Hon'ble Minister-in-charge in his room last week and he had agreed. If these facts are denied that he had no discussion with an important member of the Jute Mills Association, I will certainly withdraw my motion.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: It is not only not a fact but I think it is a deliberate attempt to manufacture a false statement.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of the denial by the Minister-in-charge of any knowledge of this matter and far less of approval, I shall certainly not proceed with the motion at this stage.

Statements by ex-Ministers on the circumstances connected with their resignation.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, under rule 103 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules I ask for leave to make a statement regarding the circumstances connected with my resignation.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I will also ask for similar leave after Mr. Fazlul Huq finishes.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: I will also ask for similar leave.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I will also ask for similar leave.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Any more?

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU:: It will be 13 next time.

Point of Order.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I submit that the rule which has been quoted, viz., 103, has been based on a convention in the House of Commons, where when one or two Ministers on resignation make a statement in the House, but as far as I am aware no case can be cited in the House of Commons of a Ministry as such ever making a statement after they have resigned in a body. It is obvious that this rule was never intended (Mr JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: It is obvious that this is not House of Commons) I have already said that on the basis of the House of Commons precedent this rule was framed. I will only request those members who were members of the rule-making Committee to refresh their memory. I think this question was discussed when this rule was framed and it was suggested that as there was such a convention in the House of Commons we should have a rule accordingly. It is obvious that it was never intended that when an entire Ministry resigned they should be allowed to make a statement, because when they resigned they had their party and they had also a following in the House and they could, if they so desired, bring any matter they liked before the House by the various procedures that have been provided in the rule. For example, it is possible either by a vote of no-confidence or by a censure motion to initiate a debate and explain their position. When an individual Minister resigns from office he resigns from the party and practically he dissociates himself from the party to which he belonged and which was supporting him. Therefore, it is obvious that that Minister must get some opportunity in the House to explain his position.

Secondly, Sir, I submit that there is a proviso that a Minister may make a statement pertinent thereto in reply to the statement of the member. Obviously this is meant for an eventuality when there is a Ministry and an individual member has resigned from that Ministry. He submits his reason why he has resigned; there might be difference of opinion between the Ministry and the individual Minister and therefore any one

the representatives of the Ministry can give a reply to the atement of the member. In a case where the Ministry go out together there is nobody there to give a reply to the statement on the resignation. Therefore I submit, Sir, that this rule not meant for cases of this kind. It will be creating a very bad ecedent if we do so. As far as our own practice in this House is conrned it has always been the case that whenever individual Ministers have signed and the Cabinet has been in existence, they have made statents and there were two or three occasions that I can remember when vantage of this rule was taken: First I believe by Mr Nalini Ranjan rker when he resigned, then by Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed and then by r. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. On these occasions, Sir, advantage of this le was taken. But many Ministries have gone and never advantage of is rule was taken. So I would appeal to you, Sir, as the custodian of e rights and privileges of this House not to let this rule be abused.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have heard e legal exposition of my honourable friend the Chief Minister who is cidentally a member of the profession to which I belong The questions ich he has raised are two-fold. He referred to what passed at a meeting the committee which was commissioned to frame these Assembly Rules ich you have in front of you. A reference to what transpired in a comittee is a procedure unknown to constitutional law Secondly, Sir, coming interpretations, my honourable friend wanted the proviso to govern the ain part of the rule 103(*1*). This is a novel method of interpreting atutes. Rule 103 is specific. A member who has resigned the office of e Minister——(Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Who is a member?) ere I am yet a member of the Legislative Assembly of the province of engal who has resigned the office of a Minister. It cannot be maintained at I was dismissed by His Excellency the Governor Therefore, I who ave resigned the office of a Minister may, with the consent of the Speaker, ake a personal statement in explanation of my resignation.

Sir, it is perfectly true that the only reservation which this rule conains is the consent of the Speaker. If, Sir, you in your wisdom and as e Hon'ble Chief Minister put it as the custodian of the liberties of this ouse feel that a member who has resigned his office of a Minister may ot make a personal statement in explanation of his resignation, that is a ling, Sir, which will bind me and every member of the House, but may submit in all humility that that ruling will be inconsistent with the osition of the Chair as the custodian of the liberties and the dignity of e House. My honourable friend the Chief Minister referred to the roviso that a Minister shall be entitled after such a member has made statement to make a statement pertinent thereto. This proviso deals with vo questions. First of all, all Ministries do not have the same opinion. he cases of Coalition Ministries are cases which need not be forgotten, and there is any quarrel between a Minister and a Minister with which uarrels my honourable friend the Chief Minister is perfectly familiar, hen if there is an accusation by a member who has resigned his office of

Minister against the Minister holding office under the Crown, then that Minister holding office under the Crown may with justification give an answer to the accusations made on the floor of the House.

There is a second consideration, Sir, to which I made a reference. If, for instance, a member who has resigned the office of a Minister has conflicts not only with a Minister but with the Ministry,—that is the second possibility—then either the Ministry under the headship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister or the Minister concerned may be entitled after such a member has made a statement to make a statement pertinent thereto. May I in this connection also refer to a point which is perfectly well-known to you, but which is a point which might require re-emphasis. May I invite your attention to section 50 of the Government of India Act, 1935. The Government of India Act does not deal with "a Minister"; it deals with "a Council of Ministers" in collegiate, corporate capacity. Section 50 is to the following effect "There shall be a Council of Ministers to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except in so far", etc. It does not contemplate "a Minister" Its language is perfectly plain and simple and following the well-known rules relating to interpretation of Statutes, I shall invite your attention to the expression "Council of Ministers" in a collegiate capacity "A Minister" is indeed mentioned, but, Sir, a Minister is mentioned separately under section 51. Under section 51(*1*) the Governor's Ministers shall be chosen and summoned by him, shall be sworn as members of the council, and shall hold office during his pleasure. Then a Minister who for any period of six consecutive months is not a member of the Provincial Legislature shall at the expiration of that period cease to be a Minister. Therefore, Sir, the expression "Minister" is used specifically for this purpose by the draftsmen of rule 103 I submit that it will be absolutely contrary to the constitutional privileges of the Legislature not to allow a Minister who has resigned to make a statement before the House for the purpose of explaining his conduct. He is here in a representative capacity and his representative capacity is double. He represents his constituency and he before his resignation represented the majority in the House To take away that right will be thoroughly bureaucratic in manner, in method and in texture.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you gave a ruling on the 29th March and you took the gentlemen who stood one after another as collectively and jointly responsible and you adjourned the House on that ground. Now these people want to separate their identity. Your ruling is there. They went out as a Cabinet and you declared them *functus officio* as a body. They have no right under the constitution, nor any section of the Government of India Act, nor the practice in the Mother of Parliaments to make statements. The whole Cabinet was dissolved and these gentlemen can have no individual rights now. They can go and explain their conduct to the people outside, to their constituencies, but so far as this House is concerned, you, Sir, joined them together and they shall not be put asunder (laughter).

Mr. SPEAKER: I am glad, Mr. Siddiqi, that you have made a statement to the effect that in the Mother of Parliaments there is a convention that when the entire Ministry goes out, no Minister has got any right to make a statement. Are you sure in your mind about this? And, if so, will you kindly help me with any precedent on this point?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He does not care for precedents!

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, Mr. Banerjee in the course of his statement has made one argument which confirms the position of the Hon'ble Chief Minister. He has said "provided that a Minister shall be entitled after such member has made his statement to make a statement pertinent thereto". This reference that when there is a quarrel between two Ministers or when there is a quarrel between one Minister and the rest of the Ministry, then in that case when a Minister resigns that member resigning his office should make a statement before the House, entitles the Minister concerned to make a statement before the House in reply. Sir, if you read the whole of section 103 together with the proviso, that presupposes a difference of opinion among the Ministers themselves within the same Cabinet, you will find that section 103 was intended only to cover up those cases of differences, but when the entire Ministry resigns there is no case of difference and therefore no question of explanation does arise. If you take the entire section the legal interpretation should be that this section was intended, as the Chief Minister has said, to cover all cases of difference of opinion among the Ministers belonging to the same Cabinet, and this is based on well-known conventions. Sir, you have put a question to Mr. Siddiqi, viz., was there any convention in the House of Commons that when a Ministry resigns, a Minister has the right to explain? I will put it in another way. Is it known to any member of the House whether in the House of Commons or here in this Assembly that when the entire Ministry has resigned, they have made any statement before the House? Here in this House the entire Ministry resigned twice——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, is there any debate now?

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, there is no question of debate. It is a matter of some constitutional importance, and I myself have spent anxious hours over it. I shall only be too glad to get any assistance from the honourable members of this House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If you want precedents to help you, may I request you to ask these friends to quote one other precedent from the so-called Step-mother of Parliament, namely,—have they got one precedent from the House of Commons—let us have one more precedent—of any Ministry having been required to resign when they commanded majority in the Legislature?

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I thought that you would be able to help me with some precedents in this matter and I was waiting to hear them, but this is not what I expected.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On the question of precedents, there were two occasions in this very Assembly when the entire Ministry went out of office and they did choose not to make any statement. Similarly, there were hundreds of occasions, rather thousands of occasions, when the Ministries in England went out of office and they did not make any statement. Sir, it stands to reason to infer from that that it has not been a convention that when the entire Ministry goes out, they don't make any statement before the House. If that is not the convention I don't know what would be a convention.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Are you afraid of that statement?

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: We are not afraid. It is a question of time.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: You have taken so much more time.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: It is not for today only. It is for all time to come. It is not a question of taking one hour or two today but it is a question of settling once and for all the procedure in this House. Therefore, Sir, if you read the entire section, as I have read, I hope you will be pleased to accept the interpretation that I have given On the question of precedents as I have stated before, there is no member in this House who will be able to tell you that there was any precedent anywhere either in the House of Commons or here in this very Assembly that when the entire Ministry went out of office they ever made any statements. Therefore, I request that you would be pleased to accept the interpretation that has been put upon that section by the Hon'ble Chief Minister

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You have called upon us to quote precedents. Is it not the absence of precedents on this point that is the most important aspect of the question? That being so, your own ruling is binding on these people. (Interruption.) I am still speaking. It would be better if you put the people who interrupt me in their proper place.

Mr. SPEAKER: They are already in their proper place.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Members opposite have asked us to give you the authority immediately. I have not got the reference books before me but I can say this that from my little reading of constitutional history and constitutional law in my own defective way and also from my experience not only of the British Parliament but also the French Chambre des Deputes, the Egyptian Parliament and the Syrian Parliament I can say that that is not the practice. Those who support the contention of the honourable member for the University of Calcutta, are talking with their tongues in their cheek. Joint responsibility of the Cabinet must be upheld. We are on this side of the House today. We may not be here tomorrow. Members opposite should see that any decision taken today might recoil on them in the future In these matters, we should always take a long view of things.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, you have asked members of the House to quote precedents from the history of the British Parliament. Sir, let us recall some of the occasions when

Ministries resigned but general elections did not follow. In 1916, the Asquith Cabinet fell and Mr. Lloyd George became the Prime Minister with a reorganised Cabinet.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Did they lose the majority?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: It was a Coalition Government. You will remember that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Did they lose the majority?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: That question does not arise.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: That is the most important aspect of the question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the use of quoting such precedents?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Secondly, let us take 1922. In 1922, Mr. Lloyd George resigned and——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Made a public statement in Parliament.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: No, not in the House. He did not make a statement in the House of Commons, nor did the other members of his Cabinet. I was in England at that time and following the proceedings very closely. Then take 1931 when the Macdonald Government was changed. The late Mr. Ramsey Macdonald formed a Coalition with the Conservatives and some Liberals. There was a National Government on that occasion but the retiring Ministers did not make any statements in the House of Commons. These are the three occasions that I remember in recent British Parliamentary History and they might be of some assistance to you in coming to a decision on the point raised.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: I think that instead of travelling abroad we ought to remember that in June, 1937, before the Congress was persuaded to take office, it was made quite clear that, should there be any difference between a Minister and the Governor, then the Minister would have a right to make a public statement and disclose the matter in the Legislature. That right was conceded and it forms part of our constitution. I have not got that communication with me here but that absolutely settles the matter and the Minister who has to go out of office when he has admittedly a majority on account of the designs of the Head of the Executive owes a duty to explain how it was brought out and he has a right to do so.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, may I say one or two words in support of the contention which has been raised by my esteemed friend Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee. It is no use travelling away from this country and this Legislature. The Hon'ble Mr. Goswami might take his stand upon the fact that he was in England in a certain year when certain events took place in the political world in that country. That is of no

consequence whatsoever so far as this House is concerned. You, Sir, have been pleased to call for any precedents which might throw some light upon the question at issue before you. Sir, I would invite your attention to the strict wording of the rule which has been framed by this Legislature and which guides the deliberations of this House. The whole emphasis which has been sought to be placed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister is upon the words "a member" who has resigned office. I take my stand exactly on the same words. I say I am a member who has resigned office. It is possible that my resignation took place when resignations were obtained from other Ministers as well. But that does not, cannot, take away my inherent right conferred by this rule of making a statement, subject only to one condition, viz., your consent. I hope, Sir, that all this miasma will not be raised to cloud the issue, which has been the only issue in this case, whether this rule entitles me as a member who has resigned the office of a Minister to make a statement before this House. I hope and trust that your attention will not be diverted by any extraneous points which do not arise in this connection.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'ble the Chief Minister has suggested that this rule 103 only contemplates the case where a Ministry continues in office and I think the Chief Minister has also suggested the reason for that, namely, that an individual Minister does not have opportunities that a body of Ministers have of explaining to the country and to the public his reasons for resignation——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Why not?

Mr. A. F. STARK: I submit, Sir, there is no precedent in parliamentary practice anywhere——

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Do not talk of parliamentary practice here: do not speak of that nonsense——

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is no precedent of extorting resignations from Ministers——(Loud noise from Opposition benches.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. We are now discussing the question of constitutional law, and I think there ought not to be any heat over the discussion on this important question of constitutional law.

Mr. A. F. STARK: You have asked, Sir, for authority for the interpretation of rule 103 Books on parliamentary practice are extraordinarily silent on the point for the simple reason that a situation such as has arisen today has never happened in England, but Sir,——(Cries of "hear, hear" from the Opposition benches.)

Dr. J. M. DAS GUPTA: Under similar circumstances the head of the executive in England would have been shot at.

Mr. A. F. STARK: But, Sir, what is in May's Parliamentary Practice is, I think, very illuminating. The only statement in May's Parliamentary Practice is this: "Explanation by a member of the circumstances which

have caused his resignation of office in the Government is usually made immediately before the commencement of public business. Though debate must not arise upon the explanation statements pertinent thereto on behalf of the Government have been permitted." I submit that that clearly contemplates the case in which a member of the Government resigns and that Government continues in office, and therefore the obvious reason and justification for this procedure is that an individual member of the Government resigning has not the same opportunities of explaining to the House and to the country his reasons for resigning as a body of Ministers have.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: May I submit, Sir, a few words——

(Laughter from the Opposition Benches.)

Sir, I feel even in the midst of laughter with which I am greeted——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: অ্যাং যায়, ব্যাং যায়, চ্যাং যায়; খলসে বলে আমিও যাই।

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: Sir, I submit that this remark is most objectionable and is not becoming of a gentleman or a member of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I am extremely sorry that you have made such a remark and I hope you will withdraw that expression.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, if you like I am prepared to take away any of these three words অ্যাং, ব্যাং, চ্যাং (Laughter in the whole House.)

Mr. SPEAKER: If you want to enjoy at the cost of an honourable member of this House, I don't think it is desirable. But in view of the fact that Dr. Sanyal has withdrawn the remark we ought to stop here and Mr. Mandal will now speak.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: Sir, just now on the floor of the House my honourable friend Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu has stated that resignation was extorted.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are discussing a point of constitutional law which has nothing to do with that.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: Sir, when the then Chief Minister, Mr. Fazlul Huq, resigned, he made a declaration in this House that his resignation was desired by His Excellency. Then, Sir, you gave your opinion that with his resignation no Ministry existed, the entire Ministry went out. Then, Sir, some sort of explanation was given on the floor of the House by the then Chief Minister as to what led to his resignation. Then, Sir, he got ample opportunity to make public speeches and to give explanation to the people of this country. This question has been raised by my friend Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee. (Interruptions from the Opposition benches.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I am now asking for the assistance of honourable members of this House in the very difficult task before me, namely, as to whether the Hon'ble Minister should or should not be allowed to speak uninterrupted. He is advancing, as far as I can see, an argument to the effect that the ex-Chief Minister had had an opportunity and therefore he cannot have another opportunity. You will kindly have a little patience and hear him, and then there will come a time for you to reply.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: Mr. Banerjee has said that as Ministers they had double responsibility—responsibility to the members of their party and responsibility to their constituencies.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. My friend either did not hear me or could not understand me.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no personal explanation.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: I do not know who else has understood him in a different way. It is on record——

Mr. SPEAKER: It is no use crossing words. Just state your points concisely and precisely.

The Hon'ble Mr. JOGENDRA NATH MANDAL: I submit, Sir, that the ex-Chief Minister has had ample opportunity to make clear the reason for his resignation on the floor of the House and he had a sufficient opportunity to declare to the people of the country as to what led to his resignation, and I think nothing more remained left for further explanation. I need not go into some of the constitutional points that have been raised, but I submit that they are not entitled to get any more opportunity to make any statement in explaining the reasons of their resignation.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in explaining section 103 of our rules Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin says that section 103 can have no application to the case of resignation of a whole Ministry. It can only have application in the case of resignation of a single or individual minister. That, I understand, is his whole argument. But if you look to the marginal note you will find that the resignation of Ministers is contemplated there without any qualification whatsoever. I happened to be a member of the Rule-framing Committee and therefore I can claim some knowledge of the considerations that weighed with the Committee in framing these rules. There is no doubt that when this rule was framed the cue was taken from parliamentary practice, but, Sir, we have got to be guided by the rule as it stands with due regard to the cases that may arise here demanding application of this rule. Sir Nazimuddin says that only a Minister who has resigned his office from a continuing Council of Ministers can make a statement and that the rule does not refer to the resignation of the whole Ministry. Sir Nazimuddin forgets that there could not be any reference at all to the resignation of a Ministry as such because of the fact that neither section 50 of the Government of India Act, nor any other

section of the Government of India Act contemplates or refers to a Ministry. There is always a reference to a Council of Ministers and in every section dealing with Ministry the Ministers are referred to in plural number, but there is no reference to a whole Ministry. The Government of India Act does not contemplate a Ministry as such. It rather contemplates a collocation or a company of Ministers if it would not be derogatory to the position of the Ministers to say so. Sir, I invite your attention to section 50. Section 50 clearly states there shall be a Council of Ministers to advise the Governor. Section 51 again begins with the words "The Governor's Ministers shall be chosen" in such and such fashion, etc. There is no reference to a Ministry as a whole so far as the Government of India Act is concerned. Therefore section 103 of the Rules had to be framed in the way in which it has been framed, viz., in terms of an individual Minister, that "A member who has resigned the office of Minister may with consent of the Speaker make a personal statement". What is there in the rule, I ask moreover, to prevent a Minister being interpreted in the plural number as Ministers who have resigned? There is nothing which can prevent such an interpretation. Rather the General Clauses Act will favour my interpretation, viz., even if "a member" is here referred to in the singular number it may be interpreted to mean members, all such members or, more than one such member. Then, Sir Nazimuddin will probably ask, why then there is this proviso? The proviso only contemplates a particular case, namely, a case where an individual Minister has resigned. But because it contemplates a particular case it cannot be construed that the proviso controls the section as a whole and that the section cannot apply to other cases beyond the case that is contemplated in the proviso. That cannot be a fair interpretation. The proviso simply contemplates a particular case and when that particular case will arise the proviso will have application, but so far as the principal part of the section is concerned it can well be so construed as to apply to other cases than the case that is contemplated in the proviso. That is, Sir, what I understand to be the scope of the section and the significance of the proviso and in my view it will not be justifiable to interpret the proviso as controlling the whole section and limiting the circumstances contemplated in the section as a whole.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Sir, you are fully aware that in interpreting a statute under the General Clauses Act the singular includes the plural.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I submit, Sir, that whatever may have been said from the other side, the statement of the last speaker from the Opposition side is very valuable. It has been admitted, as I had already said, that the rule was framed by a Committee. At the time when it was framed we had the precedent of the House of Commons or the Mother of Parliaments before us, and that is the reason how this rule has come into being. Now, Sir, it has been argued that as the phraseology of this rule stands it entitles the members, even a Council of Ministers, if they so choose, to make a statement. I am prepared to accept for argument's sake that this is so, but, Sir, this rule has taken precaution against an argument of this

character and it has left the discretion in your hands so that if you, Sir, think that this is not the object for which this rule was framed, then you will not allow these statements to be made. Therefore, Sir, I submit that in view of the fact that the real object of the rule was quite different from the purpose for which it is now claimed to be used because of the wording of the rule, it is a fit case in which you should use your discretion and not allow a very bad precedent to be created.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Ruling on point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I can now give my decision. I am thankful to you, gentlemen, for the assistance rendered to me on this novel question.

The answer to the question whether or not the *ex*-Ministers should be permitted to make statements depends upon the interpretation of rule 108 of the Assembly Procedure Rules. To my mind the rule is clear and admits of only one interpretation, viz., that any member of this House resigning from the Ministry may, with the consent of the Speaker, make a personal statement in explanation of his resignation and a Minister in office at the time when the statement is made, shall be entitled after such member has made his statement to make a statement pertinent thereto and that beyond this no discussion shall be permissible on the statement made by the *ex*-Minister. The limitations attempted to be imported into this rule are, in my opinion, unwarranted by the language of the rule. It appears clear to me that any member who resigns the office of a Minister may make a statement, the only limitations being (*i*) that it should be made with the consent of the Speaker and (*ii*) that it shall be made after questions and before the list of business for the day is entered upon. The question, therefore, arises whether in the present case the Speaker should refuse his consent.

Undoubtedly it is discretionary with the Speaker to give or refuse consent but equally undoubtedly the Speaker will never exercise his discretion arbitrarily but will exercise it judiciously, if not judicially, and never in a way so as to curtail the rights and privileges of members of this House. As a rule a member resigning from Ministry will have the consent of the Speaker and it is only when the Speaker is convinced that to give consent will lead to an abuse of the privilege that he will withhold it. There cannot be any hard and fast rule when his consent should be given and when withheld and each case will have to be decided on its own merit.

I do not think the language of the rule warrants any conclusion to the effect that when the entire Ministry resigns, the members of the Ministry will have no right to make any personal statement. The fact that the entire Ministry has resigned will by itself be no ground for refusing consent to any *ex*-Minister who may be willing to make a statement. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition benches.)

The expression "a member" undoubtedly means "any member" and the singular includes the plural according to the General Clauses Act. Besides, in India the Ministry may not have joint responsibility at all. It has been stated that there is no precedent anywhere and none at least in India where a statement has been made by an *ex*-Minister when the entire Ministry has resigned. I am not aware if there has been any occasion when the *ex*-Prime Minister or any other Minister has made any statement in the British Parliament on an occasion when the entire Ministry has resigned. But I am equally unaware if the Speaker of the House of Commons has ever refused consent to any Minister to make any personal statement when the entire Ministry has resigned. On the other hand it appears to me that even when there is a dissolution of the Ministry by the resignation of the Prime Minister, a Minister can make a personal statement in explanation of his resignation (*vide* Jenning's Cabinet Government, page 65). It appears to be clear that in Canada explanations are generally allowed to be made in both Houses in case of Ministerial changes including changes of the entire Ministry (*vide* Bourinot's "Parliamentary Procedure", page 355). It is not, therefore, correct to say that there is no precedent for allowing personal explanation by an *ex*-Minister when the entire Ministry resigns. But even if conventions were otherwise in Britain I shall be loath in slavishly following such conventions in India. Bengal is not Britain and the Bengal Legislative Assembly is not the British Parliament. It has been truly said of the British Parliament that it has got the power to make and unmake everything except making a man a woman and a woman a man (laughter) and it can be said with equal force with regard to the Bengal Legislative Assembly that it can make and unmake practically nothing except at the pleasure of the Governor. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition benches.) What would be inconceivable in Britain occurs and passes here as normal incidents. Thus while we should always be ready to profit by the experience gained by Parliaments in other parts of the world we should be, at the same time, chary not to be misled by false analogies. Conventions, I am afraid, cannot be imported direct from the British Parliament to be engrafted on Indian Provincial Legislatures which differ so vitally from the British Parliament. Conventions will grow up to meet our peculiar needs and exigencies of circumstances.

It is not correct to say that a convention has grown or is growing up in India for not allowing *ex*-Ministers to make statement when the entire Ministry has resigned. The present constitution came into force only in 1937. There have been resignations in various provinces by individual Ministers as well as by the Ministry as a whole: in some cases the individual Ministers have made statements, in others even individual Ministers have not made statements.

This does not, in my opinion, create any convention or precedent whatsoever. It is optional with the *ex*-Ministers to make a statement. The question could only arise if on the resignation of the entire Ministry the Speaker had refused to give consent to the *ex*-Ministers or to any individual Ministers forming that Ministry simply on the ground that the entire Ministry had resigned. I am not aware if there has been any such occasion in any of

the provinces in India during these years. I am, therefore, clearly of opinion that in every case of resignation whether of the entire Ministry or of individual Ministers from the Ministry any outgoing Minister or Ministers may, if they so choose, ask for the consent of the Speaker to make personal statements in explanation of their resignation and on each occasion it will be the duty of the Speaker either to give consent or to withhold consent according to his discretion which, as I have already stated, will be exercised in a way so as not to curtail the privileges of the members of this House.

Let me now come to the case before us. It has been stated that Mr. Fazlul Huq has lost the right of making a statement because he did not make a statement on the 29th March, 1943. I don't think there is any substance in this contention. It is clear that the House was adjourned before any business for the day was taken up and long before the time for making any statement, namely, after questions and before the list of business was entered upon, had actually arrived. Moreover, Mr. Fazlul Huq was perfectly clear that he would make a statement on a subsequent day and today is the first day after the 29th of March when the Assembly has met and he has asked for the consent of the Speaker at the appropriate time.

It has further been stated that he has lost his right in view of the fact that he has made statements about his resignation publicly on many occasions. That may or may not be a fact and we cannot for obvious reasons take notice of newspaper reports about statements alleged to have been made by him on the subject. Even assuming he has done so, I think it will be no ground for my refusing consent to him to make his statement in this House.

In conclusion I find absolutely no reason why consent should be refused to Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq. On the other hand, the circumstances so far revealed under which his resignation took place are extraordinary and the whole affair still appears to be shrouded in mystery. Even the date from which his resignation took effect appears to be in dispute. In these circumstances I think I cannot refuse to give my consent if Mr. Fazlul Huq chooses to make a statement to clear up the situation. I give my consent to Mr. Fazlul Huq to make his statement.

As for the other *ex*-Ministers, I think, they also should be allowed to make their statements for the reasons stated above and also in view of the fact that the other *ex*-Ministers belong to different parties who formed the Coalition Ministry. I give my consent to all the other three *ex*-Ministers who have asked for my consent.

Statements by ex-Ministers on the circumstances connected with their resignations.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, before I proceed to make my statement, permit me to offer you my grateful thanks for having given me this opportunity of making a statement in explanation of the circumstances which led to my resignation. I was not surprised, Sir, that my application for leave was so vehemently opposed by the Ministry and the Ministry's supporters. As I proceed to make my statement the House will find that

this opposition proceeded from the prickings of a guilty conscience. Sir, I will not waste time any more. As leave has been given I will proceed, Sir, to make a statement, but once more let me say we feel proud of you as Speaker because you have upheld the traditions of this House and also protected the rights and privileges of members.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we meet to-day in this House under circumstances almost unique in the history of Provincial Autonomy in India. We last met on the 29th March, 1943, and our parting on that fateful morning took place under dramatic circumstances. During this interval of a week and three months, events have taken place which have shaken the constitution to its very foundations and exposed the mockery of Provincial Autonomy. The House will recollect that as soon as we met on the last day of the Budget session, I was questioned by Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy and others whether I had resigned my office as Chief Minister and, if so, whether my resignation had been accepted. I replied to both the questions in the affirmative, but my replies were necessarily confined to giving information on the specific points raised and did not give a detailed account of the circumstances under which I was dexterously pushed out of office. The House was adjourned, and during the recess, I related on different occasions the circumstances under which I was made to sign a previously drafted and typed document, purporting to be my letter of resignation as Chief Minister.

I thought that these statements gave the public a fairly accurate idea of the manner in which my term of office as Chief Minister had been made dramatically to terminate, and I need make no further statements in this House. I have, however, been surprised to find that the Secretary of State for India has been making, or is being made to make, statements in Parliament regarding the circumstances relating to my resignation which contain incorrect versions of what had actually taken place and also insinuations which I cannot allow to pass unchallenged. In the course of his statements in Parliament, the Secretary of State for India has remarked that I had voluntarily resigned and that my resignation and subsequent events "had occurred in the course of procedure under provincial representative institutions". The language used by the Secretary of State was mysterious, if not meaningless. I sent a telegram to the Secretary of State definitely protesting against his incorrect version of events and requesting him to ascertain facts before he publicly committed himself to any account of what had taken place. I also sent a telegram to His Excellency the Viceroy urging him to cable correct facts to the Secretary of State for India. To this I received a reply that the Governor had been in communication with the Secretary of State and with regard to variations between my version and that of the Governor, the Secretary of State felt satisfied that the version of the Governor was correct.

I confess I was not surprised at this reply to my protests. It was quite in keeping with "the course of procedure under provincial representative institutions in India". It is the policy of shutting both your eyes to what your official subordinates may be doing, known popularly as the policy of backing the man on the spot. It is the policy which encourages officials in

India to do whatever they like, confident in the belief that whatever may be the measure of their guilt on any occasion, they will be supported all along the line by their official superiors." It is the policy which enabled Sir John Herbert, acting in "the course of procedure under representative institutions", to refuse any enquiry into the shooting tragedies in the Dacca Central Jail and into the blood-curdling allegations against the officials in Midnapore. It is the policy which enables a Governor to ignore his Ministers and to commission a Secretary to send out chosen agents into the luckless mofussil with plenty of unauthorised public money in their pockets to purchase, sell and hoard rice at their pleasure in order to be able to make fabulous profits while the children of the soil may be starving for want of food. It is the policy which enables a Governor to make appointments to high offices even in the Ministerial field of administration before, and not after, consultation with Ministers. It is the policy which enables favoured Ministers to order organised depredations into the hovels of the poor on the pretext of discovering hoarded foodstuffs, knowing full well that the countryside is already denuded of surplus rice. It is the policy which enables a reactionary Government to gag the Press and prevent publication of news and to stifle criticisms of their actions. It is the policy which secures immunity to Ministers when they defy public opinion and give monopolies in trade to associates political and otherwise, for the purpose of amassing wealth beyond the dreams of avarice to be utilised for public and private purposes.

So far as I am concerned, my duty is therefore clear. I must tell the House the whole story in all its details so that future generations may know how India had been governed under the much vaunted system of Provincial Autonomy. I must however confess that my statement in this House to-day has been a subject of deep and anxious consideration. On the one hand, I owe a duty to this House and to my countrymen, to place before them fully and frankly my version of the entire incident. This duty becomes all the more imperative when I find that the Governor has been putting forward his own version of the events which I cannot accept as a correct statement of facts. On the other hand, I realise that I cannot make statements without criticism of the Governor's action which must in the nature of things be occasionally adverse, and some times even bitter and unpleasant. Not that Sir John Herbert or his fellow actors in the Constitutional Drama whose gruesome details I am going to unfold to-day, deserve any consideration at my hands. Had India been a free country and this Assembly a real Parliament with Sovereign Powers, Sir John Herbert would long ago have been recalled to milder climes, to spend his talents on less pretentious avocations than the Governorship of the Premier Province of India. It is hardly necessary to add that what I have to say about Sir John Herbert to-day refers only to his actions in his official capacity as the Executive Head of the Province and has no bearing whatever on any other aspect of his character or conduct.

As I proceed to narrate the circumstances under which Sir John Herbert managed to secure my signature on that fraudulent document called my letter of resignation, my memory travels back to the happy days I had spent

with four successive Governors before I met Sir John Herbert. The first of this brilliant galaxy of Administrators was Sir John Anderson, a distinguished member of the Home Civil Service. Sir Robert Reid and Sir John Woodhead, who came next, were exceptionally able and successful members of the Indian Civil Service and all of them came to hold the high position of Governor of Bengal after distinguished official careers in England and in India. I have nothing but happy memories of the manner in which the Governors and the subordinate officials used to assist me in my arduous task of administration as the first Premier of the Province. The fourth Governor with whom I worked was the late lamented Lord Brabourne. It would be invidious to make a distinction between one Governor and another, but I cannot help saying that Lord Brabourne was a Governor of an exceptionally superior type. A born gentleman, an accomplished statesman, a cultured Englishman with the most charming manner, Lord Brabourne combined sympathy with firmness and will always be remembered as one of the most successful administrators who have ever come out to India. While working with these four Governors I never felt that there were things in the Government of India Act known as Governor's discretion, or individual judgment or special responsibilities. We all felt that the Council of Ministers and the Governor formed a team whose sole object was just, upright, efficient and enlightened administration.

I now come to Sir John Herbert. I must tell the House that for some time after we began to work together, he was to me a considerate friend. He told me that I was the first person to whom he had talked in Bengal. He assured me that he would act as a constitutional Governor and I would be able to carry on the administration as Chief Minister without any interference from him. He even mildly hinted, comparing small things with great, that he would be to me what the King was to Mr. Chamberlain. For some time Sir John Herbert kept his word and continued the policy of co-operation with the Ministers which had been adopted by his predecessors. Gradually, however, he began to exhibit a tendency to interfere in the details of the administration and to press his points of view with a tenacity which we felt was inconsistent with the free exercise by Ministers of their own responsibilities. We however thought that these short-comings were temperamental and would disappear in course of time.

Towards the end of 1941, important political developments took place leading to the dissolution of the cabinet which had been functioning in Bengal since the beginning of Provincial Autonomy. In the middle of 1941, I had my differences with Mr. Jinnah over my membership of the National Defence Council, and although I resigned that membership after some controversy, the letter containing my resignation was couched in a language to which Mr. Jinnah took serious objection. It is now evident that some of my the then colleagues in the Cabinet were already planning to oust me from office in order to secure the power for themselves and were only waiting for an opportunity. My dissension with Mr. Jinnah seemed to give them that opportunity. On the 1st of December, 1941, without any previous

indication whatsoever, six of my colleagues tendered something like mass resignation. Two other resignations followed and I accepted the suggestion of the Governor to tender my resignation as well, in order to enable the Governor to constitute another Cabinet. My conspiring colleagues moved heaven and earth to get Hindu colleagues, but they utterly failed in their attempt. On the contrary, all the various groups in the House rallied round me, and no less than 137 M.L.A.'s sent on their own account a memorandum to the Governor declaring that they were willing to work the constitution under my leadership. About forty members, calling themselves the Muslim League Parliamentary Party in the Assembly, sullenly held aloof. I did my utmost to induce them to join me in forming an all-parties cabinet, but they stubbornly refused to do so.

One would have thought that the obvious course left for the Governor was to call me to form the cabinet. But he adopted a course which was at once unusual and unconstitutional He waited long to see if Sir Nazimuddin could secure a majority and it was only when he finally despaired of having Sir Nazimuddin as Chief Minister, and perhaps because of pressure from other quarters that Sir John after 10 days' hesitation asked me on the 11th December, 1941, to form a cabinet I shall not refer here to the manner in which my party was crippled by the sudden arrest of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose before I took oath of my office as Chief Minister. By the 12th December I was able to submit the names of 8 of my colleagues and I wanted time to submit some more names. The 9 Ministers were sworn in on the 17th December and Sir Nazimuddin went into opposition on the pretence of upholding the interests of the Muslim League in Bengal.

The above is a plain and brief narrative of the events which led to the formation of the Progressive Coalition cabinet in December, 1941, but there are certain points of great significance which do not appear on the surface and require clarification. It has to be remembered that the Progressive Coalition Party which was formd in 1941, and which was the Ministerialist party in the Assembly, consisted of all the parties in the House except a few dozen Moslems who called themselves the Moslem League party and the European party who ordinarily are not represented in the cabinet. I did my best to induce Sir Nazimuddin and some of his colleagues to join my cabinet but they refused to do so. Nevertheless, the Ministry that we formed in December, 1941, was as near an approach to a national cabinet as could be in the circumstances then prevailing in the Legislature. It was for the first time that Moslems belonging to various points of view, Hindus belonging to the Congress and of other schools of thought, together with various small groups and Scheduled Caste groups all combined to co-operate in the administration on purely national and patriotic lines. I suspect that such a cabinet did not appeal to Sir John Herbert and he therefore hesitated to agree to the formation of such a cabinet and continued to evade its formation till at last he was compelled to give in. It is well known that the union of Hindus and Moslems and of other communities in a common endeavour for the political advancement of the country does not commend itself to Britishers with imperialistic views. Secondly the group represented by Sir Nazimuddin

was at that time a great political asset in the hands of British Imperialists. It was through this school of politicians that British statesmen hoped to fight the Congress and indeed all nationalist activities.

Significant events soon showed that the cabinet we formed in December, 1941, did not find favour with Sir John Herbert. Sometime in January, 1942, I requested the Governor to let me have an expansion of the cabinet, particularly by the addition of 2 Ministers of the Scheduled Castes. I also insisted on the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries. The Governor told me plainly that no expansion of the cabinet would be made or Parliamentary Secretaries appointed till the budget had been discussed and passed. The budget was passed in due course but he still refused to expand the cabinet. Each time that I wanted Sir John Herbert to take up the question, he put me off with some excuse or other, but showed himself extremely anxious to get Sir Nazimuddin and some of his colleagues into the Cabinet. Sometimes he used to tell me that there should be no expansion of the cabinet till the Moslem League had openly declared its attitude. I am referring to these facts in order to compare Sir John's attitude towards me when the cabinet was constituted in December, 1941, with the attitude of Sir John towards Sir Nazimuddin and the present Ministry, constituted on the ruins of the Ministry of 1941. Suffice it to say, that not only did Sir John Herbert exert his personal influence to render the formation of the present cabinet possible but that he agreed to everything that Sir Nazimuddin proposed even to the extent of allowing absurdities in his efforts to help the Ministry. In my case, I had to be content with a cabinet of 9 Ministers and one Parliamentary Secretary but Sir Nazimuddin was at once given a cabinet of 13 Ministers, 13 Parliamentary Secretaries and 4 additional Government Whips at an additional annual cost of nearly 2 lakhs of rupees to the public revenues.

I will now come back to the consideration of events after the formation of our cabinet of 1941. As I have said, Sir John Herbert was not only unsympathetic but in many cases positively obstructive. We felt his interference and obstruction in matters of day to day administration so very keenly that we apprehended that we were heading towards a crisis. I accordingly addressed a letter to the Governor on 2nd August, 1942, explaining to him that the situation was becoming critical and asking him to proceed on constitutional lines. I wrote:—

"At a time when the implications of the Congress Resolution have filled all our hearts with the deepest anxiety for the future of India, I feel unfortunately compelled to write this letter to Your Excellency. I wish I could avoid this correspondence. But circumstances have left me no other alternative, and it pains me much to have to say very bluntly that you have contributed not a little to the creation of the situation which has forced me to take this unpleasant step. You are the Governor of the Province and I am your Chief Minister and your principal adviser. Our mutual relations impose on both of us reciprocal duties and obligations, and I can never shirk the responsibility of intervening by means of friendly, but frank, advice whenever I find you are treading the wrong path. If I allow things

to drift, I will be failing in my duty to you and to the people of this Province. I am convinced that the time has come when I must speak to you quite openly what I feel in order to avoid a constitutional crisis in Bengal. More than once have I sounded a note of caution and have told you that you have been following a policy which cannot but have the inevitable effect of practically suspending the constitution in Bengal, reducing it to a position similar to that of the Provinces governed under section 93 of the Government of India Act. I have tried to convince you that, by listening to the advice of a few officials, you are acting as if your Ministers did not exist and that you were free to deal direct with Secretaries and other permanent officials. As the head of the Cabinet I cannot possibly allow this attitude on your part to go unchallenged. The present letter is no more than another and the last attempt to put matters right, and I sincerely hope that this letter will have the desired effect. I am writing with the stern resolve to assert myself as the Chief Minister, and I can assure you that if it leads to a constitutional struggle between you as the Governor and me as the Chief Minister, I will not shirk from doing my duty regardless of consequences.

Broadly speaking, there are two classes of cases wherein, I regret to have to say, you have failed to act as a constitutional Governor. In the first category I will put that class of cases wherein I have detected your personal interference in almost every matter of administrative detail, including even those where your interference is definitely excluded by the Government of India Act. A little reflection will convince you how unwelcome must be such an interference, and how bitterly Ministers must resent impediments in the way of the exercise of the very limited powers which they possess under the Act. As it is, the Act is bad enough and is no better than a clever subterfuge by which the permanent officials have got all the powers but no responsibility, whereas the Ministers have all the responibility and no powers. But the camouflage with which the Act abounds is so transparent that it is not difficult to detect that, beneath the pretentious device of Ministers functioning in a system of Provincial Autonomy, the real power is still vested in the permanent officials; the Ministers have been given a mockery of authority, and the steel frame of the Imperial Services still remains intact, dominating the entire administration, and casting sombre shadows over the activities of Ministers. Any interference with even this limited power of Ministers is therefore the worst of its kind, and I regret that your record in this respect has in no way been a negligible one. In the second category I would put those classes of cases in which you have, directly or indirectly, encouraged sections of permanent officials to flout the authority of Ministers, leading them to ignore Ministers altogether, and to deal directly with you as if the Ministers did not exist. Arising out of all this, there is also one important factor, not directly connected with the cases I have mentioned above, but which has also contributed towards the creation of the situation which I sincerely deplore. I refer to your attitude in Cabinet meetings, where you monopolise all the discussions and practically force decisions on your Ministers, decisions which are in

many cases the outcome of advice tendered to you by permanent officials belonging to Services whose traditions are fundamentally opposed to a genuine spirit of sympathy with the feelings and aspirations of the people.

I know these are very harsh words to use to a Governor, but I want to be perfectly frank with you. I have decided to carry frankness to the extreme limit, because it is my earnest desire to render you the utmost possible help in the difficult days that lie ahead of us. Whether you will accept my advice or not, is a matter with which I have no concern. The choice must lie with you. It is a question of confidence and trust. British officials in India are now faced with a situation unparalleled in the history of any civilised country in modern times. Gigantic events are shaking Empires to their very foundations. Here in India, we are faced with a crisis which may lead to the most momentous events affecting the destinies not merely of the people of this country, but of millions of human beings all over the world. If ever statesmanship was indispensable in guiding the policy of rulers, the present situation in India has need of that statesmanship in the fullest measure. I am, therefore, asking you to play the role of a true statesman and to realise that India to-day has attained a position in world politics wherein the wishes of its people in matters of administration cannot be ignored with anything like impunity. Administrative measures must be suited to the genius and traditions of the people and not fashioned according to the whims and caprices of hardened bureaucrats to many of whom autocratic ideas are bound up with the very breath of their lives. It is to your own Ministers and not to this class of officers that you should turn for advice if you desire to avoid pitfalls which have always been responsible for administrative disasters

Let me now come to facts. As regards your personal interference in total disregard of Ministerial responsibilities, I will briefly refer to only a few. There is first of all the case of your mandate to the Joint Secretary, Commerce and Labour Department, in April last in the matter of the rice removal policy. Here you acted as if the Government of India Act in Bengal had been suspended, and you were at the head of an administration under section 93 of the Act. In a matter of such vital importance, affecting the question of the food-stuffs of the people, you should have called an emergent meeting of the Cabinet and discussed with your Ministers the best means of carrying out the wishes of the military authorities and of the Central Government. But you did nothing of the kind. You did not even send for the Minister in charge of the Department, although he was readily available, but you sent for the Joint Secretary instead. You gave him orders to take up the work of removal at once, without caring to find out the exact position regarding the excess of rice and paddy in different areas and the best means of removal and the cheapest method of carrying out the scheme. The Joint Secretary says that when he was arranging to carry out your orders, you grew impatient and gave him definite directions to arrange for the removal of excess rice from 3 districts within 24 hours. Even then you did not consult your Ministers, because presumably you thought you could not trust them. The result has been a dismal failure

so far as this particular policy is concerned. The Joint Secretary, in his haste and hurry to oblige you, advanced twenty lakhs of rupees to a nominee of a friend to begin the work, without any terms having been settled, or without any arrangements having been made for the safety of public money, solely for the purpose of showing that he had started carrying out your orders. When we came to know of all this at a late stage, we did what we could to retrieve the unfortunate position into which Government had been placed, but even then we could not avert the disaster. At the present moment we are faced with a rice famine in Bengal mainly in consequence of an uncalled for interference on your part, and of hasty action on the part of the Joint Secretary. As regards the huge sums of money advanced indiscreetly under your orders by the Joint Secretary in the first instance, our legal advisers are extremely dubious if we can ever expect to recover the whole amount. The loss to Government is bound to be a considerable one, and the responsibility for this needless waste of public money must be shared by you and your Joint Secretary.

Then I come to the boat removal policy. In this you have all along been acting under the advice and guidance of some permanent officials without taking your Ministers into confidence. You have even ignored one who happens to be not merely your Chief Minister but also the Minister in charge of the Home Department. You seem to have been consulting the Military authorities in secret and discussing plans with the permanent officials; and when everything is almost settled and matters have gone beyond control, you sometimes talk to us with a view to impart information as to what had been done or was being done. The most outstanding instance of blunder which has been committed by the permanent officials, apparently with your knowledge and concurrence, has been the case of the prevention of boats from going out into the Bay of Bengal for the purpose of cultivation of the lands in the various islands lying at the mouth of the Delta. Some tardy recognition of the urgency of the situation was made when a limited number of boats was allowed to go out into the Bay, but it was then too late to mend matters. I will not go into details, nor is it necessary to do so. It is enough for me to emphasize that the whole scheme was planned in consultation with the Military authorities and some permanent officials, without the knowledge not merely of the Cabinet but even of the Home Minister.

I now come to the question of the formation of Home Guards. It is true that you have recently given a belated consent to our proposals regarding these organisations, but the mischief of officialisation of Home Guards had already been complete. Constitutionally, you should have accepted our advice, but you did not, with the result that the permanent officials have practically officialised the whole concern. I do not know how far you will now be able to retrieve the mischief that has been done.

I will now say a few words about the manner in which you have all along resisted my efforts for the expansion of the Cabinet and the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries. Whatever may be your powers under the Act, it is evident that as the Chief Minister I should have the final say

in the matter of the composition of the Cabinet and in parliamentary appointments, and that except for the gravest of reasons, you should not reject my advice in such matters. In England, it would be unthinkable that the Prime Minister's wishes about the Cabinet should be ignored. But your attitude has been one of definite disregard of my wishes in these respects. You seem to have taken up this attitude, perhaps in the forlorn hope of getting Sir Nazimuddin and his group into the Cabinet. Eight months have now passed and your efforts to placate them have borne no fruit, but your reluctance to accept my advice has not been slow to produce the most bitter results inasmuch as it has hampered the administration of the various departments of Government and also thrown a burden on our shoulders which it is physically impossible for us to bear.

During the last few days I have discovered that orders have been passed by Secretaries either on their own responsibility or with your approval, explicit or implicit, by totally ignoring the Ministers. For instance, orders have been passed that the Government of India should be requested to send back to Bengal all officers lent to India by the Bengal Government; orders have been passed that the powers exercisable by the Provincial Government under section 76 (*B*) of the Defence of India Act and Rules be delegated to local officers. I was not consulted in these cases although they affect vital matters of policy. Every day some fact or other comes to light which reveals how orders had been passed in important matters without the cognisance of the Minister concerned. I strongly deprecate and resent this procedure. After all, I and my Cabinet are responsible for whatever action is taken by Government and announced in your name. It is wholly unconstitutional and even unfair to saddle us with responsibility for matters of which we have had no knowledge and with which we have had no concern. Posts are created for officers without our knowledge, and forced upon us for acceptance, under circumstances which leave us no alternative but to agree. I could multiply instances, but I purposely refrain from doing so as I feel that what I have said already is enough to justify my grievance.

I now come to the class of cases in which permanent officials have acted in defiance of Ministers by completely ignoring their authority. Let me begin with the case of the outrages alleged to have been committed on women at Sanoa in the district of Noakhali. There was a Deputy Collector at Feni who happened to be the Additional Subdivisional Officer at the time, who had sent a telegram to the District Magistrate apprising him of what had occurred and asking for instructions how to proceed. This action on the part of the Deputy Collector was resented by some of the officials, presumably because they thought that the telegram might be a very important piece of evidence against the guilty persons. This officer who had only tried to do this duty, was transferred from Feni by a telegram, at the bidding of the local officials, by the Chief Secretary. And the Chief Secretary passed orders without consulting me who happened to be the Chief Minister and the Home Minister! I came to know of this transfer several days after it had taken place when I went to Feni to find out what the facts of the alleged outrage actually were. I have since seen the papers

relating to this transfer. The telegram of course is not on the File, but there is a remark by a high official that the Deputy Collector had acted indiscreetly. We know what this means. The Deputy Collector was naturally frightened and sought safety by applying for leave. This leave was refused, and the officer was summarily transferred to Serajganj, because high officials wanted to bundle him out of the Chittagong Division altogether.

May I in this connection remind you that when you came to know of my programme to visit Feni, you advised me not to go because you thought that my visit would embarrrass the local officials? I explained to you that I had no intention of embarrassing anybody, but I considered it my duty to pay a visit to an area where the people seemed to be so much distressed. When I went there I found that practically all the officials of the Chittagong Division had gathered at Feni with a view to prevent my visit to the place of occurrence. The Commissioner of the Division plainly told me that he had received a telephonic message from your Secretary asking him to persuade me to abandon my visit. I did not go to the village because I did not want to quarrel with the officials but met relations of most of the women said to have been outraged and the relations of their deceased husbands. I had also certain documents brought up to me which left no doubt in my mind as to what had happened. The reasons for the telegraphic transfer of the Deputy Collector, and for the anxiety shown by you and the local officials to prevent my visit to the locality are abundantly clear. Even the Chief Minister had to be kept out of the way, because he could not perhaps be trusted to fall into line with the official plans. Further comment is superfluous.

I now come to the events leading to the closing down of the Lady Brabourne College in Calcutta. You referred to this fact in the last Cabinet meeting and tried to defend the Secretaries, the Director of Public Instruction and the other permanent officials I said nothing to contradict your *assertions in apologia* because I felt so aggrieved that I thought silence was the better course to adopt to prevent an outburst. The facts constitute a revolting instance of insubordination, and the main incidents are well-known. In spite of assurances given to me by the Revenue Secretary and other officials that no decision would be taken regarding the Lady Brabourne College without reference to me, it appears that the various Secretaries and the Director of Public Instruction between themselves managed to hand over the buildings and appliances to the military authorities without reference even to the Minister in charge. The official note submitted by the Director of Public Instruction was to the effect that he had confirmed the arrangements. It is reminiscent of the language of the officials half a century ago when every bureaucrat in the Writers' Buildings used to consider himself as big as the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. These officials who have bungled over the Lady Brabourne College incident should be told very plainly that things are now entirely different from what they have been in the past, and that they must know how to adapt themselves to the altered circumstances.

I will now say a few words about the appointments to A.R.P. services. Muslims have not got even 5 per cent. of these appointments made by the Controller and his subordinates in Calcutta, and not even 2 per cent. of the appointments made by the permanent officials in the mofussil. To add insult to injury, some of these officials have stated that competent Muslims were not forthcoming. Some officials have taken the strange plea that Muslims are not willing to accept appointments on low salaries and some have hazarded the very ingenuous and novel excuse that Muslims are well placed in life and therefore not available for A.R.P. appointments. I may tell you that these statements are not correct, and it is surprising that high officials holding responsible positions should have added to rank injustice the frivolity of baseless excuses. I am annexing some tables of figures which will show how Muslim interests have been sacrificed by these officials. The situation has passed beyond the stage of argument and explanation. The Muslim community will accept no denial and I insist that the erring officials be compelled to make ample amends without delay. I propose to take up this case with the officials concerned, and see that justice is done to all communities and interests.

I want you to consent to the formation of a Bengali Army consisting of a hundred thousand young Bengalis consisting of Hindu and Moslem youths on a fifty-fifty basis There is an insistent demand for such a step being taken at once, and the people of Bengal will not be satisfied with any excuses. It is a national demand which must be immediately conceded.

You should act as the constitutional Governor and not as the mouthpiece of permanent officials, or of any political party. In other words, you should allow Provincial Autonomy to function honestly rather than as a cloak for the exercise of autocratic powers as if the Province was being governed under section 93 of the Act."

I received no reply to this letter of the 2nd August, 1942, and I was surprised that even in the course of private interviews, Sir John Herbert never referred to the matters I had discussed in the letter regarding my strong criticisms of his actions. It is significant that he never attempted to reply to any of the very serious allegations I had made in the letter, although possibly he was all the time harbouring resentment. A few days later came the Bombay resolution of the All-India Congress Committee and the disturbances which broke out all over India on the 9th of August. It is painful to refer to the unfortunate happenings in India which followed the Congress resolution, and Bengal naturally had more than its share of the policy of repression which was carried on throughout India in the name of suppression of what was called the Congress rebellion in the country. The Defence of India Rules were freely used to arrest and imprison prominent leaders of the people and also to impose what was called collective fines in areas where the disturbances happened to be of an abnormal character. In the case of many of these arrests and orders of imprisonment, I differed from the police point of view and also from the Governor's point of view. In a very few cases, my recommendations for release were accepted, but I was over-ruled in every other case. In some cases, the

evidence appeared to me to be so slender that I expressed my surprise that the police should be insisting on orders being passed on practically no evidence. A few of these arrested persons have been released within the last week and I wish the materials on which they had been originally arrested and the reasons for which my orders of release were over-ruled by the Governor, could be made public. Possibly, the Governor has agreed to the release of prominent politicals in order to cover the present Ministry with short-lived glory, but the public can easily see through the game. In many cases orders passed by me as long ago as August or September last have been allowed to remain unexecuted till some momentous considerations of State have induced the Governor to consent to their release at this moment just on the eve of the session of the Legislature.

In the case of collective fines, we had tremendous difficulties. In most of the cases the amounts imposed were hardly commensurate with the crimes that had been committed and in almost all of these cases the innocent suffered more than the guilty As usual, my dissentient voice never prevailed and the police point of view and the recommendations of the permanent officials found favour with the Governor.

All this time, I had been urging upon the Governor to let me have an expansion of the cabinet both because the number of Ministers was not adequate to cope with the enormous amount of work, and also because there were groups in the Progressive Coalition Party especially belonging to the scheduled caste which were not adequately represented in the cabinet. But in all these efforts, I failed completely The Governor did not agree to any expansion and avoided acceding to my request on some pretext or other.

In spite of all my efforts to avert a crisis, time brought no change in the attitude of the Governor. Our relations day by day became strained, and matters came almost to a crisis during the August and September Session of the Assembly. The European Party had tabled a resolution supporting all the measures taken by the Government to suppress what was called the Congress rebellion, and the so-called Muslim League party had tabled a resolution expressing the opinion that the measures taken had been inadequate. Both these resolutions were somewhat embarrassing to me because neither of them contained the whole truth The Muslim League motion was meant as a vote of censure and the European party resolution was meant to extract a statement from the Congress groups that the repressive measures taken had been justified. The Assembly, however, broke up under somewhat boisterous scenes of indiscipline manifested by a few members of the Muslim League, but as subsequent events went to show, the matter did not terminate there.

In the meantime, the situation in the province deteriorated and the disastrous consequences of the mistaken rice policy began to manifest themselves. There was shortage of rice even in the most fertile portions of Bengal and in spite of loud protests by the people, reckless speculation in rice by Government agents began to deprive the people in the rural areas of even their ordinary requirements of food.

I went to Delhi to attend a conference regarding the condition of rice and other foodstuffs and I got an assurance from the Government of India that all exports of rice from Bengal would be prohibited. Unfortunately, however, export was never stopped and authentic reports have disclosed the deplorable fact that even when there was a rice famine in Bengal, exports of rice continued to go on in large quantities. It was at this time that the Governor decided to appoint a rice controlling officer in place of Hon. Somersett Butler to control all sales and purchase of rice and selected Mr. McInnes for this purpose. I had represented to the Governor that an Indian with sufficient experience of business in rice should be appointed, but he was of a different opinion. I was surprised one day to hear that the selection had already been made and Mr. McInnes had been asked to join the post. I made no secret of the fact that I did not approve either of the appointment of Mr. McInnes or the manner in which that appointment had been made. Matters were becoming unpleasant and Mr. Pinnell came to see me one day with the file relating to that appointment. After an elaborate discussion I thought that it would be useless to upset an appointment already made, and I therefore agreed to give Mr. McInnes a chance. I was, however, surprised to find subsequently some remarks made by the Governor in which the facts about the appointment of Mr. McInnes had been very much distorted and there was also a remark by the Governor that Mr. McInnes and Mr. Pinnell should be allowed to go on unchecked with their own policy, and any interference on the part of the Ministers with their work should be reported to the Governor. I took serious objection to these remarks and I felt compelled to write a frank letter to the Governor, explaining to him my point of view and telling him how bitterly I resented the whole affair.

The letter, Sir, was dated the 9th January, 1943, and as I came to the House I have received a letter from the Secretary to the Governor that the Governor objects to this letter being read in the House and in deference to the wishes of the Governor I will not read that letter to the House.

While things were still in this unpleasant state, the Governor began to insist that Cabinet Ministers should make what he called an unequivocal statement regarding their attitude towards the measures taken to suppress the Congress movement. He expected that at the earliest opportunity we should make such a statement to the House. My colleagues belonging to the Congress party and our supporters belonging to the Congress groups had no hesitation in making a full and frank expression of their attitude towards the movement and also the measures that had been taken by the Government to suppress the movement. Accordingly, my Hindu colleagues and I met the European party at a small meeting and there explained our whole position. The European party were fully satisfied and for the moment there was something like peace. Various events, however, brought to the surface the latent feelings of dissatisfaction which the Governor, the permanent officials, and the European party bore towards me and some of my colleagues. Matters came to a head when Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee made his statement to the House on the 12th February

regarding the circumstances leading to his resignation. The statement made by Dr. Mookerjee added fuel to the fire. We were asked to dissociate ourselves from the statement made by Dr. Mookerjee, and practically to make a statement in the House that the Governor had been acting in a most constitutional manner and that the measures taken by Government had not only been amply justified but had been carried out under circumstances of exceptional clemency under great provocation. Personally, I was not prepared categorically to deny all that Dr. Mookerjee had said; there was much in that statement with which I certainly agreed, and I could not reconcile my conscience with the suggestion that had been made to me, to condemn statements with which I was more or less in agreement. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the European party became violently inflamed against me and I now suspect that from February onwards there was a sort of an agreement between my political adversaries on the one hand, and high officials and the European party on the other, to oust me from office. I felt the situation very keenly. I found myself working in an uncongenial atmosphere and always hampered by those from whom I expected support and co-operation. I thought that the best solution of the situation would be to have an all-parties Cabinet, which would be in a position to work unaffected by any opposition, and would be strong enough to resist any attempts on the part of any party or group to hamper the activities of the Government.

It was at this stage that I made my statement in the House regarding Government policy on Midnapore affairs. The matter came up before the House in the course of a discussion on an adjournment motion, and all sections of the House except the European party strongly urged the appointment of a committee of enquiry. The allegations made were of so serious a character and yet so specific, that it was felt that it would be in the interest of the officials themselves to put the accusers to proof of their accusations. I agreed. This amounted to a promise to hold an enquiry into the allegations, and when the Governor heard what I had said he wrote to me the following letter:

"Government House,
Calcutta,
The 15th February, 1943.

MY DEAR CHIEF MINISTER,

I have received information which I have difficulty in crediting in view of your report on Midnapore at your last interview, that you have given today in the Legislature an undertaking for an enquiry into the conduct of officials in that district. You are well aware that this subject attracts my special responsibilities and you are also well aware of my views on the undesirability of enquiries in this matter. If my information is correct, I shall expect an explanation from you at your interview tomorrow morning of your conduct in failing to consult me before announcing what purports to be the decision of the Government.

Yours sincerely,
J. A. HERBERT.

THE HON'BLE MR. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ."

I could not take the situation lying down and wrote to the Governor the following reply:

"114-A, New Park Street, Calcutta,

The 16th February, 1943.

DEAR SIR JOHN,

In reply to your letter of the 15th February, 1943, I write to say that I owe you no explanation whatever in respect of my 'conduct' in failing to consult you before announcing what according to you is the decision of the Government; but I certainly owe you a duty to administer a mild warning that indecorous language such as has been used in your letter under reply should, in future, be avoided in any correspondence between the Governor and his Chief Minister.

During my last interview I certainly did not convey any impression that the affairs of Midnapore did not call for an enquiry. That interview only lasted for 15 to 20 minutes, and reference to Midnapore in the course of the discussion did not take up more than 5 minutes. It was for the first time during the last 5 months that I had been to Midnapore and even that for only 6 hours. I could only visit 2 or 3 villages, which are alleged to have been scenes of some outrages on women. All that I told you was that there had been no regular enquiry and it was difficult to say whether there were no exaggerations or whether these allegations were true. It was obviously impossible for me to give you anything like a report about Midnapore. As a matter of fact, I had been asking the Home Department officials to let me have the Governmnt version about Midnapore. But they utterly failed to do so or at any rate, could not supply me with any report, except a scrappy note which was handed over to me by Mr. Porter in the Assembly House during the course of the debate yesterday. Even these notes do not, in the least, pretend to touch even the fringe of the various serious allegations that were made yesterday on the floor of the House. It is, therefore, incorrect to say that I had given you any report about Midnapore. I do not know what you mean by this remark but let me tell you that I know nothing about what has happened in Midnapore, nor was it possible for me to give you any information, nor did I actually give any report about the happenings in the district.

Permit me to tell you that the adjournment motion was tabled on Friday and the whole of the Home Department knew, and I am absolutely certain that you yourself knew, that serious allegations were going to be made about the happenings at Midnapore. In the course of the speech made by Dr. Syamaprosad Mookerjee on the opening day of the Session, he did not mince matters about Midnapore and he gave sufficient indications of the kind of speeches that would be made on the floor of the House in the course of the Debate. It is impossible for me to believe that you did not feel that there would be an insistent and almost irresistible demand for an enquiry from all sides of the House. If your feelings have been that no enquiry

should be instituted, it was your clear duty to send for me and tell me that whatever the demand may be and from whatever side it may be, I was to have told the House that you were opposed to such an enquiry and therefore no enquiry can be promised by Government. Let me add also that since Saturday, we had been closetted together with higher officials of the Home Department who knew we were in favour of an enquiry. How can I believe after this that you knew nothing about a very certain demand that would be made for an enquiry? You neglected your duty in sending for me and, now you accuse me that in the House I gave an unauthoritative decision of Government. When I was in the House, I found that not only were the most serious charges brought by responsible members of the House, but that the demand for an enquiry was not opposed by a single member. Even the European Group kept silent and the Opposition were loudest in condemning us for not having made enquiries long before. In the circumstances, I felt, in consultation with my colleagues, that it was impossible to resist the demand for the enquiry that had been made.

I enclose herewith a copy of the concluding portion of my speech which I delivered yesterday on the floor of the House. Contrary to my usual practice, I read out from a manuscript the last portion of my speech. A perusal of the speech will convince you that what I said was that the Council of Ministers, as distinguished from Government, were agreed that it would be expedient to hold a committee of enquiry if only with a view to exculpating the public servants from the very grave charges such as had been levelled against them. You will thus see that the question whether or not the Council of Ministers should tender to you a particular advice does not come within the purview of your special responsibilities, even if it be conceded that the acceptance of such advice would involve the exercise of your special responsibilities. In these circumstances, I do not think that in so far as my statement in the Assembly is concerned any of your special responsibilities are attracted. If and when the Council of Ministers tenders to you advice contemplated in the penultimate sentence of my speech, it will then be for you to consider whether in accepting this advice your special responsibilities are attracted.

It appears from your letter that you are not prepared to give your consent to the constitution of a committee of enquiry. If so, the only course left open to me is to make a statement in the House in which I shall endeavour to explain that my statement made yesterday should not be taken as a commitment on the part of the Government to a committee of enquiry, and that I propose to read out to the House your letter under reply so as to explain my position. I shall not however do so without giving you previous notice. My colleagues and I are responsible to the Legislature and the Legislature has a right to expect a sufficient explanation as to why a committee of enquiry cannot be constituted. The only explanation which I can offer is the letter I have received from you.

I was due for an interview with you this morning at 10. I have already verbally indicated to your Private Secretary that it will not be possible for me to go and see you, because I consider that unless sufficient amends

are made for the language used in your letter under reply, no useful purpose would be served by an interview which would admittedly have been carried out in a spirit of anger.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. FAZLUL HUQ.

HIS EXCELLENCY SIR JOHN HERBERT, G.C.I.E.,

Governor of Bengal."

All this happened on the eve of and during the Budget discussion, and the voting on Budget demands, and I had to plunge into the most strenuous most critical and most difficult of all the Assembly sessions with a mind weighed down with worries and anxieties for the future. Many of my supporters were in jail, and although the European party were not openly in Opposition, the support they occasionally gave was lukewarm and half-hearted. Many of those whom I had hitherto looked upon as my supporters seemed to be in collusion with the Opposition, and our Government was subject to constant fusillades from all sides. Through the mercy of Providence, however, we overcame all these attempts to overthrow us, till we reached the votings on the 29th March when there was only one day left over for votings on Budget demands.

I suddenly received a summon from the Governor to see him at 7-30 p.m. on Sunday, the 28th March. I was in high spirits when I went to Government House, because I found all my colleagues and our supporters confident of what appeared to be our invulnerable position. When I met the Governor at about 7-30 p.m., I found him seated with his Secretary, and when we began the conversation we three were the only persons in that room. After a few minutes' talk, the Governor asked for my resignation. I have told the story so often that I feel I would be boring the House with a repetition, but for the sake of continuity of narrative, I cannot but repeat the wonderful story. I vehemently but respectfully protested, but the Governor told me that he wanted my resignation, as I had made statements in the House to the effect that I would be prepared to tender resignation in order to facilitate the formation of an all-parties Cabinet. I said that I still adhered to that position but that was no reason why I should resign without being satisfied about the fulfilment of the conditions for an All-Parties Ministry. He, however, insisted on my tendering resignation then and there, and in order to clinch the matter, he brought out a typed piece of paper purporting to be my letter of resignation to the Governor. I explained to him that if I tendered my resignation at that stage, the Budget demands would remain unfinished and the Finance Bill also would be sabotaged. But the Governor was still insisting on my signature. I then asked for time to consult my colleagues and my party. But the Governor was obdurate and refused my request. He was determined to have my signature then and there. I still resisted. Upon this, the Governor slightly changed his front and assured me that no effect would be given to the letter of resignation immediately, but that he would keep it with himself to be shown to party-leaders in case there was a

possibility of an all-parties Cabinet. Upon this assurance given by the Governor, that the letter of resignation would not be made effective unless actually required for the purpose of the formation of an all-parties Cabinet, I signed that letter and handed it over to the Governor. I again reminded him that it was not meant to be treated as a letter of resignation and that no effect should be given to it unless the circumstances arose for which I had consented to sign that previously drafted piece of paper. I now recall an incident which did not strike me then, but which I now consider extremely significant. As soon as I had handed over that document to the Governor, he turned to the Secretary and asked him to telephone something to the European party. A letter of resignation had been drafted, and kept ready-typed for signature Governor insisting for signature, although my resignation meant the sabotage of the entire Budget, the telephone message went to the European Party as soon as I had put my signature; his acceptance of the letter of resignation came the same evening within two hours of my return home, contrary to his definite assurance. Who can deny that the conclusion is irresistible that there was design and conspiracy of a sordid character?

As soon as the House met, I was questioned as to what had happened and I made a brief reply. The House was adjourned and I immediately wrote the following letter to Sir John:

"Calcutta,
The 29th March, 1943.

DEAR SIR JOHN,

I understand that Your Excellency wants me to see you. I am, at the present moment, so mentally upset that I do not find it possible for me to have any useful discussion with Your Excellency on any subject.

From early morning I was hearing all sorts of rumours that I saw Your Excellency last night and everybody seemed to know that I had tendered my resignation which had been accepted. As soon as I entered the House this morning, pointed questions were put to me as to whether it was a fact that I had tendered resignation and that the resignation had been accepted. You will judge for yourself that I could not tell a lie, and I had to tell the House that I had to sign a letter of resignation which had been already drafted and that I received your letter accepting my resignation in course of less than a couple of hours. You will, therefore, now see the reason why I had advised you not to press for my resignation. I pointedly told you about the Budget and the Finance Bill and as far as I remember, you said that I had to pilot the Finance Bill and therefore the resignation would not take effect immediately. I was, therefore, surprised when I found two lines as a postscript in your own handwriting that you would defer the announcement of the acceptance of my resignation till 8 p.m. tonight, and that you are doing so at my request. I fully remember that I did not make any such request. I said that the resignation should not be accepted for the

present, and I do not understand how the question of deferring the announcement of acceptance till 8 p.m. tonight could possibly arise. I do not see the particular significance of 8 p.m.

I must now tell you something about the constitutional position. As soon as I made the announcement in the House that my resignation had been accepted, pointed questions were put to me whether our responsibilities were joint or several, and I told that our responsibilities were joint and several. Thereupon the Speaker ruled that the Ministry is *functus officio* and therefore could not move the Budget demands, and on this the Speaker adjourned the House for a fortnight.

I have made a short statement, as I could not refuse answering questions that were put to me concerning such an event. I have, however, refrained from going into details.

A party meeting is going on and I am being pestered with questions from all sides as to why I signed the letter of resignation and I am being seriously taken to task for letting the party and my colleagues down. Vigorous speeches are being made that I had betrayed the party and betrayed my colleagues. I remember that I requested you not to insist on my signing the letter of resignation before I had an opportunity of consulting my colleagues and the party, but you said that the letter should be signed then and there, which had already been drafted in anticipation. I only carried out Your Excellency's request; but I knew that trouble would arise and trouble has arisen.

As I was going to sign this letter, I was informed that you wanted to have a Cabinet meeting this afternoon. I was also told that you hold the view that my resignation does not take effect till 8 p.m. tonight, and as regards the others, they continue in office since they have not officially tendered resignation. My colleagues and I differ from you in this view. So far as my resignation is concerned, it has already been accepted and your postscript said that only the announcement would not be made till 8 p.m. this evening. It is obvious that the acceptance and the announcement are two different things. Once the resignation is accepted and communicated, it does not matter when it is announced. As regards the other Ministers, it may be a debatable point, but the Speaker has ruled that they are *functus officio* in consequence of my resignation.

Unless therefore your acceptance of my resignation is withdrawn and the letter I had to sign at Government House is treated as cancelled and returned to me, there cannot be a Cabinet meeting today.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. FAZLUL HUQ.

H. E. SIR JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E."

It is significant that I received no reply to this letter and that the allegations made in this letter have not yet been contradicted. The postscript in his letter accepting my resignation deserves more than a

passing notice. It means that although the Governor knew that I had become *functus officio* by reason of his acceptance of my resignation, he wanted me to appear before the Assembly, as if I was still a Minister in office, move for demands in his name and thereby knowingly perpetrate a fraud on the Assembly. And I was prompted to perpetrate this fraud by no less a person than the Governor of the Province! The fact that the Governor did not make any comments on the allegations contained in this letter, leave alone contradicting them, is of great significance. I repeated all my allegations against the Governor in a letter which I wrote to His Excellency the Viceroy on the 16th April, a copy of which I forwarded to the Governor. I have made my accusations and allegations public on several occasions, but up till now, the Governor has not thought fit to reply to my allegations contained in letters which I purposely wrote to him, nor have there been any contradictions in Press notes or communiqués issued from Government House. My allegations and accusations cannot therefore be described as after-thoughts spun out of my imagination, and they remain absolutely unchallenged.

To come now to the activities of Sir John Herbert after he had once managed to secure my so-called letter of resignation. All ideas of having an All-Parties' Ministry were cast to the winds and the Governor began to act as if the only end he had in view was somehow to smuggle Sir Nazimuddin into power. He forgot his solemn promises given to me that he would consult the leaders of all the parties and try to form a national Cabinet. He forgot also his solemn assurances given to me on the night of the 28th of March that he was anxious to retain me as his Chief Minister, and that I had not forfeited his confidence but that he was asking me to sign the so-called letter of resignation only to enable him to parley with party leaders. I possess abundant documentary evidence that Sir John Herbert knew that I would consent to voluntary resignation only, and only if, such resignation appeared to be indispensably necessary for the purpose of the formation of an all-parties' Cabinet. Extracts from my correspondence with Sir John Herbert will make this abundantly clear.

On the 26th March, I wrote as follows:—

"DEAR SIR JOHN,

With reference to my conversation with Your Excellency this morning, I write to say that at a time like this it is extremely desirable that the Cabinet should be constituted so as to include the representatives of all the political parties in the Legislature. As I have several times told Your Excellency, I should always be ready to help you in bringing about such a consummation, and if at any time Your Excellency feels that I am an obstacle to the formation of such a Cabinet, I shall be prepared to tender resignation of my office in the interest of the country.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. FAZLUL HUQ.

H. E. SIR JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E."

To this I received the following reply:—

"DEAR CHIEF MINISTER,

H. E. asks me to thank you for your letter of today's date in which you state that you are willing to tender your resignation in order to facilitate the constitution of a Cabinet comprising all political parties. I am to enquire whether you would have any objection to the letter being shown to party leaders with a view to consulting them as to the formation of such a Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
A. DEC. WILLIAMS."

It is evident that even the so-called letter of resignation drafted and kept ready by the Governor himself emphasized this point of view. That letter runs in the following terms:—

"DEAR SIR JOHN,

Understanding that there is a probability of the formation of a Ministry representative of most of the parties in the event of my resignation, I hereby tender my resignation of my office as Minister in the sincere hope that this will prove to be in the best interests of the people of Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. FAZLUL HUQ.

To H. E. SIR JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E."

It is therefore evident that even up to the 28th March, 1943, when Sir John Herbert got my signature on that letter of resignation, it was agreed that it should be the endeavour of the Governor to form a representative and all-parties' Cabinet. But the cabinet that has been formed is not an All-Parties' Cabinet. It is not even representative of the majority of the various parties in the House. It is not only much less representative than the cabinet I had formed in 1941 but is in fact a cabinet composed of a single party in the House under the domination of a political caucus composed of the members of the family of the Khwajas of Dacca. Sir John Herbert so far forgot himself that he stooped to canvass support for Sir Nazimuddin's cabinet. He then proceeded to put Sir Nazimuddin in power with a cabinet consisting of 13 Ministers, 13 Parliamentary Secretaries and 4 Government Whips, although in our time we were not allowed any expansion of our small cabinet of only eight Ministers or the appointment of more than one Parliamentary Secretary.

I am reminded at this stage of something very similar which happened in the year 1926. Lord Lytton was then the Governor and was anxious to have Sir Abdur Rahim as one of his Ministers, provided a suitable Caste Hindu could be induced to become a colleague of Sir Abdur Rahim. It so happened that in consequence of a speech which Sir Abdur Rahim had delivered at Aligarh in 1925, no caste Hindu would consent to join him as a colleague in his Ministry. Lord Lytton gave Sir Abdur Rahim only 4

days' time to find out a Hindu colleague and when Sir Abdur Rahim reported that he had not been successful in his attempts to induce any caste Hindu to join him as a Minister, Lord Lytton politely told Sir Abdur Rahim that he could not under those circumstances accept Sir Abdur Rahim as a Minister. Lord Lytton acted in a perfectly constitutional way. He realized that it was no business of his to do the work of a canvasser for Sir Abdur Rahim. But Sir John Herbert is apparently a Governor of a different type. When once he had made up his mind that I should be removed from the office of Chief Minister, he did not hesitate to adopt any measures to achieve this end. He did not hesitate to cajole me, persuade me and to hold out promises which he never meant to keep. But he forgot all his promises and cast his assurances to the winds the moment I had turned my back on Government House, and manifested all the zeal of a partisan in trying to secure colleagues for Sir Nazimuddin.

The above is by no means an exhaustive list of the many cases of unconstitutionalism and partisanship on the part of Sir John Herbert.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On a point of order, Sir. May I ask whether all this is in keeping with rule 127

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, I think this is time for prayer. Let us pray first and then I shall take up the matter.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: After that my prayer will be heard! (Laughter.)

(The House was then adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After Adjournment.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it is the desire of the House that the entire business fixed for today be finished.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Today the House meets for the first time after the formation of the new cabinet, and serious questions affecting not merely the welfare but even the existence of sixty millions of the people of this province will be discussed, raising issues of confidence and no-confidence in the present cabinet. It is evident that the cabinet is on its trial. During the last 3 months the food situation has degenerated to such an alarming extent that the famine conditions which are now raging in Bengal are unprecedented in the annals of this province. There are signs that the famine that seems to be impending on us will be far more disastrous and devastating than the great famine of 1770 A.D. The present cabinet knows very well that it is entirely to blame for the situation and that it is unable to cope with it effectively. In order to escape public criticism, it has gagged the press and forbidden public meetings where food problems are likely to be discussed. In these circumstances, Sir John Herbert should allow the Opposition a fair chance of focussing public opinion inside the House in order that the Assembly may come to a decision on all questions on their merits. Of all the faults of which a Governor can be guilty, the fault of partisanship is the most reprehensible. In England or

in the English colonies such an attitude of a Governor would never be tolerated. A partisan Governor is no more fit for his high office than a partisan Judge. By being a partisan, he acts contrary to his Instrument of Instructions and makes himself liable to removal from office.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise to my prayer again? The Governor is being called a "partisan Governor"—is that desirable?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, I think that this question arose on the last occasion when Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee made his statement and a decision was given by the Deputy Speaker who was then in the Chair. I have no reason to differ from that decision, that decision being that Governor's personal conduct, apart from his conduct as head of the executive, cannot be discussed, but the Governor's conduct as part of the administrative machinery is certainly subject to criticism and discussion.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is a recognised legal maxim in England that even the King cannot by any means place himself above the law of the land. In the case of overseas dominions of the Crown, the same legal maxim holds good. There the Crown's agents, Governors and Governor-Generals are not even general representatives of the Sovereign but have powers delegated to them by the terms of their commission and may act lawfully only within the limits of their commission. They receive powers which though ample and adequate for the government of the territories committed to their charge are nevertheless definite, enumerated and well-defined. A Governor who acts in contravention of the terms of his commission makes himself liable to censure, judicial punishment or recall. Thus Lord Dalhousie in 1828, Lord Aylmar in 1834 and Sir Colin Campbell in 1840 were recalled on an address of the legislature to the Crown even though the Canadian Constitution Act of the time contained no provision for such recall. Lord Sydenham, the Governor-General of Canada in 1840, saw nothing objectionable in such address of the Assembly for the removal of the Governor. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa also furnish similar instances of recall of Governors by the Crown on an address of the Legislature though the Constitution Acts of these Dominions had no specific provision for the purpose. In the Government of India Act, 1935, the powers of discretion and individual judgment vested in the Governor-General or the Governor are hedged by the remedial methods of (*a*) appeal to the Federal Court, (*b*) appeal to the judicial Committee of the Privy Council and (*c*) scrutiny by the House of Commons in order to prevent "the complete dictatorship" of the Governor-General or the Provincial Governor. It is therefore an outrage on the Constitution if a Governor-General or a Governor seeks to place himself above the law of the land by the exercise of his powers of discretion or individual judgment, and the legislature owes a duty to itself to help to discover and fight for constitutional remedies against such violation.

I am afraid I have trespassed too much on the patience of the House. I think I have made it abundantly clear that the fight that is going to take place between the present Ministry and the Opposition will be a fight

between the forces of reaction, of tyranny and injustice on the one hand, and the representatives of the poverty-stricken people on the other. The high and mighty, the wealthy and the affluent will be on the side of the Ministers, and the Opposition will be left to play their part under numerous difficulties and disadvantages. But I can assure the Ministers and their supporters that the Opposition will not lose heart, even if the Ministers are able to tide over this crisis. It is not the votes of the members of the Opposition which they should dread, but the tormented cries of the famine-stricken people of Bengal which will bring God's curses on their heads. Sooner or later, Ministers who have been profiteering at the cost of the poverty-stricken millions of Bengal will find their doom and meet their fate. Sir John Herbert may protect them for a while, but there is a power far mightier than Governors or Viceroys or Secretaries of State. The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small; and sooner perhaps than Sir John Herbert or the supporters of the Ministers may think, *nemesis* will overtake those who had rushed into office not to serve the people but to enjoy the sweets of power and emoluments.

If there is actually famine as we apprehend, there is bound to be a revolution in Bengal and what happened in Russia can happen also in this far flung corner of the Eastern Hemisphere. The Ministers are mistaken if they think that false propaganda will save them from their inevitable destiny. They will not be saved, unless Providence in His mercy deems it fit to forgive their sins and to give them a chance of redemption. For our part, we will go on doing our duty. We will not be disappointed or broken-hearted. If we fail to dislodge the present Ministers from power, the more they remain in office, the greater will be the catalogue of their sins, and some day sooner or later, they will be humble to the dust even as tyrants and oppressors of humanity have met their doom in the chequered history of mankind.

Sir, one word more and I have finished. I have made certain definite allegations against His Excellency the Governor. I have charged him with partisanship and violation of his Instrument of Instructions. The charges are either true and correct, or false and incorrect. The public have a right to know whether His Excellency accept my allegations as true and correct or otherwise. His Excellency is not without his remedy. Apart from issuing Government communiqués or Press Notes, His Excellency the Governor has the right to address the House and let the Members know his version of the various incidents to which I have referred in my statement. The points raised are of the utmost constitutional importance and His Excellency would be extremely ill-advised if he allows the public to draw their own conclusions from his studied silence.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Fazlul Huq has given to the House a comprehensive review of the circumstances relating to the signing of his letter of resignation. I would now crave the indulgence of the House to complete the narrative and to show how the dissolution of the Cabinet was brought about, involving what was described in the official communiqué as the resignation of the individual Ministers.

After the adjournment of the Assembly in the morning of the 29th March, the Governor invited me and my colleague Mr. P. N. Banerjee to meet him when a discussion took place regarding the situation. The Governor was pleased to express the hope that both of us would continue in office. We suggested that he should invite the different party leaders including Mr. Fazlul Huq and ask for their advice and agreement so that no legal or constitutional difficulty might stand in the way of the Budget being passed. We pointed out that such a course would be fully in accord with the spirit of the Chief Minister's resignation for an all parties Ministry which had received a full measure of support from the Governor himself. No such course was, however, adopted by him.

Two days later, on the 31st March, at the invitation of the Governor, the members of Mr. Fazlul Huq's Ministry collectively met the Governor. A written formula was read out to us by the Governor and we were asked to tender our resignation then and there. We maintained that with the resignation of the Chief Minister the entire Ministry had gone out of office and there could not be any question of resignation of an office which we had ceased to hold. We made it clear that we did not feel called upon to tender our resignation in order to facilitate the suspension of the constitution under such circumstances. As this view was not accepted we wanted to consider the position and communicate our views later on.

A copy of the formula was sent to me some time later in the day, and in the evening I sent to the Governor a statement in reply signed by the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca, Mr. P. N. Banerjee, Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Hashem Ali Khan and myself. I place before the House the Governor's Formula and our statement in reply. This is the Formula:

"I have the following statement to make to Hon'ble Ministers. Hon'ble Ministers yesterday expressed the view that as the result of Mr. Fazlul Huq's resignation and its acceptance by me they have ceased to be Ministers. I am advised that that is not the case until they have tendered their resignations and those resignations have been accepted (or they have been dismissed). British practice is, I am advised, that on the acceptance by the Crown of the resignation of the Prime Minister or his death or dismissal, the offices of his colleagues are entirely at the disposal of his successor, and though it is not necessary (as the Crown as advised by the Prime Minister can dismiss at pleasure) it is customary for Ministers as a matter of courtesy or obligation to offer resignations. I feel that in present circumstances it would be appropriate for honourable members of their own accord to submit their resignations here and now which I would accept. But if the honourable members so desire—though I consider it unnecessary—I will now formally invite them to resign here and now, solely in view of the Chief Minister's resignation, from no question of lack of confidence in them, but simply in order to clear the present situation, an object which I am sure we all desire. The alternative, of my dismissing the Ministers solely in order to clarify the constitutional position, ought not to be necessary and I think you yourselves would not desire it.

The Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq resigned with the avowed and public-spirited object of enabling the formation of a broad-based Ministry

representing as many parties as possible. I am sure that you, his colleagues, would wish to further that object. I am not as yet in a position to commission any one to form a Ministry; but I am requesting Sir Nazimuddin, as the leader of the largest self-contained party outside the late Ministry, to investigate and report to me the possibilities of the kind of Ministry which your late Chief Minister envisaged as the result of his public-spirited self-effacement. I am asking you now to co-operate, so far as you can, with Sir Nazimuddin in his investigation.

As regards arrangements for the immediate future, I regret that I am not at the moment in a position to give you any information."

This is the statement in reply which was sent by us later on that day, in the evening:

"We have to make the following statement in answer to the Formula which was read out at the conference of the colleagues of Mr. Fazlul Huq held at the Government House at 11 a.m. this morning, copies of which were sent to us later on. We adhere to our view that the resignation of Mr. Fazlul Huq as Chief Minister of the province led to the dissolution of the Council of Ministers in Bengal. In our view the tendering of resignation by us is not constitutionally necessary. The basis of a demand for resignation at once, here and now, made by His Excellency the Governor at the Government House this morning is stated to be the resignation of Mr. Fazlul Huq as Chief Minister of the province. We have it on record that the draft of the letter of resignation was kept in typed form in Government House and Mr. Fazlul Huq was forced to sign it. It is now an admitted fact that no time was given to Mr. Fazlul Huq to consider the demand of His Excellency beforehand and he was not granted in respect of the resignation permission to consult either his colleagues or members of his party before he was called upon to take such a momentous decision. He had no desire, so far as we know, of offering his resignation. In fact, we were preparing ourselves to fight a third no-confidence motion which the Muslim League members reported was to be tabled on the 29th March, 1943. We are convinced that notwithstanding the co-operation of the European Party with the Muslim League we have a majority of 30 members so as to be able to defeat any contemplated no-confidence motion. In fact, during the course of the budget session we defeated several times a combination between the Muslim League and the European Party and certain members of the Scheduled Castes Party to censure the Ministry. Our majority never failed nor faltered. Mr. Fazlul Huq's desire was, so far as we know, to make an All-Party Ministry in the province and not, as the Formula states, a broad-based Ministry representing as many parties as possible. This situation arising out of the forced resignation of Mr. Fazlul Huq, in our opinion, has been brought about by the unconstitutional act of His Excellency. The resignation of the Chief Minister without the knowledge of his colleagues was held before us when a series of cut motions on the budget was to have been discussed on the following day, that is, on the 29th March, 1943. We cannot forget the context in which our letter of resignation is demanded and we desire to keep our protest on record. In our judgment it is definitely unconstitutional. We place on

record our protest against the request of His Excellency for our resignation and to co-operate, so far as we can, with Sir Nazimuddin to investigate in the matter of formation of an alternative Ministry. We maintain that Sir Nazimuddin has no majority in the Legislature today and His Excellency is going to act contrary to the letter and spirit of the Instrument of Instructions to request Sir Nazimuddin to investigate in the matter of formation of an All-Party Government within the province. The Formula states that His Excellency has not commissioned anybody to form a Ministry. In view of the fact that except Mr. Fazlul Huq there is nobody in the Legislature today who commands a majority in the House the action of His Excellency in superseding the constitution under section 93 of the Government of India Act or in the alternative in requesting us to co-operate with a party government is open to grave constitutional objection. It is even open to the interpretation that by artificial and unconstitutional methods attempts are being made not only to break the constitution but attempts are being made for the purpose of converting the minority into a majority. We have to place on record our apprehension about the future. Although in our view we have ceased to be Ministers and although we are not entitled to tender any advice to His Excellency, we must humbly suggest to him that reactions and repercussions of the accumulated unconstitutional acts of His Excellency the Governor culminating in the resuscitation of a communal Ministry are bound to have a tremendous effect within the province; yet we are being called upon either to tender resignation or in the alternative we are threatened with dismissal. It is now evident that Mr. Fazlul Huq's Ministry was not the one which His Excellency the Governor desired and all talks during the last 16 months for the formation of an All-Party Ministry are now culminating in a purely party Government of the communal type. The delay in the formation of Mr. Fazlul Huq's Ministry, the incidents connected with its formation, the difficulties placed in its functioning during the last 16 months and the lack of sympathy and support which the Council of Ministers met with at the hands of those from whom it was entitled to receive the fullest sympathy and support confirm our views. We declare that we are no longer in office and have ceased to function as Ministers and we desire that we may be treated on that basis".

It will be noticed that the opening words of our reply made it clear that the resignation of the Chief Minister led to the dissolution of the Council of Ministers and that the tendering of resignation by us was not constitutionally necessary. We concluded our statement by reiterating the same position.

Imagine, Sir, my surprise when next morning I found from press reports of a communiqué issued from Government House that following Mr. Huq's resignation we had represented to the Governor that we considered ourselves to have demitted office, and that, mark the words, we "subsequently formally tendered our resignation".

Having thus construed our statement as the formal tendering of our resignation, the communiqué proceeded to state that "His Excellency found himself on the 31st March without a Ministry". May I, in the

interest of truth, suggest a little verbal alteration in this passage? It should have read thus: "After strenuous endeavour, His Excellency, on the 31st of March at last succeeded in finding himself without a Ministry." But the 31st of March, the last day of the financial year, proved somewhat inauspicious and inopportune for causing the disappearance of the Ministry, as the present session has shown, because, in the words of the communiqué, "it was impossible to put through the Assembly the remaining demands for grants before the 1st of April".

Such is the story of our "resignation" which in the official view had become imperative in order that the Ministry might be removed out of the way to bring in the suspension of the constitution and the installation of a Muslim League Ministry in Bengal.

Sir, so far as my party is concerned, we have never stood in the way of an honourable alliance with the Muslim League Party or with Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, its latter day Leader. The last Ministry was brought into existence by the statesmanship and dynamism of our Leader, Sri Sarat Chandra Bose, who was determined to rescue the province from the jaws of horrid communalism. That Ministry was formed on an all-party basis with the support of a large and powerful coalition which continued to maintain its majority until the very moment when the Ministry was dissolved in spite of that majority. Besides the official Congress Party which would not accept office, it was only Sir Nazimuddin and his followers who refused to play.

The new Ministry started on its career with the arrest and detention of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose who not only laid its foundation but was its chief architect and inspirer. In spite of this great initial handicap, the Ministry was sustained by the support and goodwill of the people of the province, whose patient endurance of the privations of the war was not a little due to favourable public opinion which rallied round a Ministry which they could justly call their own.

The question of an All-Party Ministry described as a National Government was raised by the Governor within a few months of the formation of the last Ministry and the idea was kept alive till the last. We on our part in common with our colleagues in the Cabinet expressed our wholehearted and consistent support although the Muslim League rejected with indignation and contempt the idea of joining a Ministry in which Mr. Fazlul Huq or his Muslim supporters had any place.

While all these confabulations and consultations were going on for including the Muslim League in the Ministry, whose position was thus kept in a state of uncertainty in the eyes of the public and the permanent officials, the Ministry was called upon to grapple with a situation of unparalleled difficulty and complexity in the history of this province. The problems presented by the war—the continuous influx of refugees from Burma, the denial policy regarding foodstuffs and transport, evacuation of extensive areas, the aerial depredations of a ruthless enemy, the exodus, the dislocation of trade, the widespread disturbances and the consequent raids, arrests and detentions, the mounting roll of political prisoners and the

harrowing tales of their starving families, the imposition of collective fines, the devastation and misery in Midnapore, Howrah and 24-Parganas and the scarcity and dearness of commodities—these were some of the major problems which never before confronted the Government of this province. All these demanded the sympathy, vigilance and energy of the Ministry and their courage and tenacity for upholding the popular cause in the counsels of the State.

The conflict of principles and policies which began to grow and deepen with the difficulty and abnormality of the situation has been stressed by Mr. Fazlul Huq in his statement before the House.

In these conflicts and struggles the Chief Minister needed all the strength, support and team spirit that his colleagues were capable of. All these were extended to him in an abundant measure by those who stood by him till the last, particularly after the unexpected blow which fell upon the Ministry when my esteemed friend Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee chose to vacate his seat in the Cabinet. More than once I placed my offer of resignation at the disposal of my party who decided on every such occasion that it would be an act of desertion on our part if we left Mr. Fazlul Huq to carry on a lone struggle. So we carried on—an unpleasant task, with obstruction within and odium outside. Now that the Ministry has been dissolved, not by the action of the Legislature but by executive contrivance, and the material facts of our strifes and struggles in assertion of popular rights and liberties have been revealed to the world, I venture to hope that public opinion has justified our action in deciding to stand or fall with our Chief, Mr. Fazlul Huq.

Sir, fallen we may have from the glamour of ministerial office, but we claim to have risen in the estimation of our people, whom alone we aspire to serve, whose opinion alone we so dearly value, and to whose judgment alone we submit our humble record.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the story of my resignation as a Minister to the Government of Bengal is drab enough. It did not perhaps merit a statement on the floor of this House in these days of acute paper shortage, specially after the powerful speech which has fallen from the lips of my friend and chief Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the first Chief Minister of the province under the Government of India Act, 1935. I rise to make my statement because this statement will constitute a postscript to the great constitutional struggle between unveiled autocracy and yet unconquered privilege. Here in this country prerogative does not readily merge into the Statute. Here in this country the steel frame part of the Government delights to parade its illegal and unconstitutional authority against the privileges of the Legislature—against the traditional obligations of a free and independent judiciary. Resigning Ministers have the right, both under Statute and under conventions, the right to make statements justifying their actions. This parliamentary privilege of a resigning Minister in this province was denied to one of my colleagues in an unconstitutional manner. The Legislative Assembly which stood adjourned

sine die from the 30th September, 1942, was suddenly prorogued immediately after the 16th November, 1942, when the resignation of the Minister concerned had been tendered and was accepted. This time the Legislature was in session when the past Ministry of which I was a member stood dissolved after the forced resignation of the Chief Minister on the night of 28th March, 1943. Almost one hundred days have rolled by and the first opportunity offered to a resigning Minister to make his statement before the Legislature of which he is a representative public servant has come to-night. Yet I am told that sedulous attempts were made behind cloister pale not to allow any of the Ministers to make a statement. The Defence of India Rules, that illegitimate daughter of the Dora in England, have gagged the press, muzzled public opinion, flouted the authority of the champions of liberty in the country including the highest judiciary in the land. Public meetings are under a ban, general election to the Legislature stands postponed, although dominions nearer the theatres of War indulge in this pastime. Why this unholy desire to stop registration of constitutional protest for the verdict of history? I can now understand why the framers of the Irish Constitution in 1921 made the summoning and the prorogation of their Parliament not dependent upon prerogative but upon the wishes of the Legislature. They had before them instances of illegal exercise of prerogative. They were familiar with the story of Government for eleven years without Parliament in England. They knew well the stories of frequent dissolutions of inconvenient Parliaments. They knew the story of the tragic fate of the Dumas of Tsarist Russia. I have all along maintained and I maintain now that the Crown as a juridical entity may not be all-merciful but it must always be just.

The full constitution of a Ministry of which I was a member was completed on the 17th of December, 1941, after Bengal had remained without a Ministry for eleven days. That Ministry was, the following day, called upon to face an imaginary vote of no-confidence from a feeble but favourite Opposition of the day.

This Ministry was fully constituted on the 24th April, 1943. After it had time to indulge in a grow-more-Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries campaign it meets the Assembly today. Forgetful partisan prerogative is a sad memory of eighteenth century undeveloped parliamentary life in England. It was a legacy of regicide revolution. Such prerogative is a mockery, a delusion and a snare.

The Ministry that has gone by was born in despair in its struggle through one of the most critical times in this chequered story of our unfortunate country. One of the greatest scourges of humanity—the Imperial Japanese military machine—declared war on the 6th of December, 1941. With the advent of America, the global war began. In their surprise and treacherous attacks on the islands of the Pacific Ocean and their sweep across further India the enemy advanced right up to the borders of Bengal. I recall the fall of Rangoon on the 12th of March, 1942. The Ministry that has gone by was then piloting the budget of the province of Bengal before this House. The number of new problems unprecedented in character, unknown to the history of India, fell thick and fast upon the civil defences of the

country. This province was faced with the tragic plight of their countrymen from Burma. It had to adjust itself to the requirements of an army then retreating and now looking forward to victory. The Ministry had to interest itself deeply with the requisitioning and commandeering of public and private buildings. It had to make arrangements for the comforts and equipments of a large army. It could not indeed avoid the horrors of war. It tried its best to mitigate the sufferings of humanity. Military exigencies did not permit breathing space of time to the civilian population in the matter of evacuation. Compensation constituted hardly a solatium to those who lost their ancestral hearths and homes. Refugee camps had to be built, refugee roads had either to be constructed or repaired as precautionary measures. The civil defence services had to be organised for the defence of the children of the soil. For guarding their hearths and homes the Ministry made a modest request for enlarging the civil defence forces of the country. That modest request was rejected with supercilious arrogance. Here in Bengal at any rate we have been obliged to learn that complete victory in a totalitarian war would be achieved without a complete mobilisation of the national forces in the country. Patronage pats on the back when its interests are subserved; it does not believe in *quid pro quo*. The real ruling clique in this province from the beginning of the career of the Ministry that has gone by looked upon it with disfavour. Bound by law to carry out the orders of the Ministry it set up an appellate tribunal under the garb of the discretion and the individual judgment clauses of the constituent Act of 1935. The definition of "individual judgment" given by His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow in his statement in June, 1937, was clean forgotten. They say Anglo-India is strewn with broken pledges. What did it matter to a soulless, thoughtless, thriftless, selfish machine if one more constitutional pledge was relegated to the limbo of oblivion? That machine pursued a relentless policy while engaged in its *ab extra* appointment of handing over to generations of Indians yet unborn the purest legacies of British justice.

To political calamities in this province were added natural calamities. Cyclone and flood swept over Midnapore in October, 1942. One of the archangels who stands at the short and the narrow gate to heaven after a long long journey—perhaps like another St. Peter with the key of heaven in his pocket—was definitely of opinion that Midnapore must be outlawed. Outlawry, I had the privilege of pointing out to the guardians of law and order in this province, had been abolished in England at any rate about a century ago. In this conflict of ideals and idealogies, in this struggle between prerogative and privilege, in this disharmony between craving for political advance and the desire to stand by the old moorings in a buttressed port where public opinion no longer was permitted under false pretences to direct the searchlight of public criticism, the Ministry that has gone by fully understood the imperfections of the Government of India Act, 1935. It realised fully that expansion of a written constitution through the agency of conventions is a historical myth in this country. Conventions are understandings. They are born, they are nourished, they grow into dimensions only as between equals and not between masters and slaves.

In December, 1942, Calcutta and its suburbs had the first baptism of fire in the war from run-about enemy aeroplanes. The Ministry was once more faced with the problem of bringing back to Calcutta its normal economic life. Calcutta and its industrial areas were almost emptied of their labouring population. To the illiteracy of poverty-stricken Indian labour was added a psychological factor which is overwhelming in its seizure—the great fear of the unknown. The Ministry tried its best to solve the problems of inadequacy of transport. Over inadequate major transports the provincial Ministry under the Government of India Act has practically no control. From December, 1942, the food problem in Bengal loomed large in public eye. For a famine that has come over the province, for the pestilence that has yet to come, for the tears and the sorrows of a civil population bound and gagged as rewards for their toils and sweat and blood, the verdict of history will make the war responsible and not a provincial Ministry cramped, cribbed and cabinned within an inexpansive framework of a peace-time written constitution and a too wooden and too inelastic, too antediluvian administration. My experience of one-night-king Abu Hassan of the immortal Arabian Nights as Minister of Civil Supplies I shall narrate before this House some other day.

In the last Budget Session of the Legislative Assembly the Ministry was confronted with the duty of electing a member to the dignity of the Chair. My friends of the Muslim League along with my European friends in the Assembly put forward the candidature of my honourable friend Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi. For him I entertain a deep personal respect. My personal respect however cannot forget the normal parliamentary practice in every country in the world which follows the Mother of Parliaments, viz., that it elects a Speaker from out of the ranks of the Party in Power. The election to the Speaker's Chair formed a *casus belli* for my European friends in the Assembly. On three successive days of the Budget Session, votes of censure against the Ministry in an indirect manner over its alleged failure to tackle the food problems in the province were moved by the then Opposition with the active and sympathetic co-operation of my European friends. My friend Mr. Hendry, the Leader of the European Party, on the 18th of February, 1943, in his speech before the Legislature admitted that "for imported commodities acute local shortage and abnormal prices have been largely due to factors beyond the control of the Bengal Government so far as the most essential commodity, rice, is concerned. This is a problem which is entirely a domestic matter which we have to settle ourselves". The real grievances of the European Party were threefold. Firstly, they did not want a disclosure in public of the differences between the head of the administration and some of the permanent officials and the Chief Minister and his colleagues. The Chief Minister was unfortunately the Home Minister also. Secondly, they wanted the Ministry to give hundred per cent. support to all the deeds or the misdeeds of the District Officials in the matter of what they could allege to be for the purposes of restoration of law and order and for the suppression of disorder, without, according to me, a scrutiny, without a demur as to excesses if any committed. Thirdly, the

European Party was against the proposal of the Home Minister of the day to set up judicial enquiries into the alleged excesses in the Dacca Jail or in the district of Midnapore. The Opposition of the day twitted the Ministry for its inability to set up a committee of enquiry into the shootings inside the Dacca Jail, where, in the felicitous language of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, "men had been shot like rabits". The European Party was not satisfied with the revelations made before the Legislature regarding alleged excesses in Midnapore that a *prima facie* case for enquiry had been made out. In his speech before the Assembly on the 15th February, 1943, Sir Nazimuddin was of the following opinion—"If the Chief Minister thinks that there have been excesses, that the allegations are to a large extent correct, then I maintain that this House would demand a proper enquiry in this matter because the allegations are of a serious nature. The Chief Minister must take the responsibility one way or the other. Either he must defend the officials or he should appoint a Comittee of Enquiry". On the 24th of February, 1943, the Leader of the European Party became convinced that "this Government, viz., Fazlul Huq's Ministry has no future, the country has a future". He was further of opinion that this province required positive leadership. This country indeed has a future. The Government of India Act, 1935, may not have a future. The province has indeed secured positive leadership. Men and women in the province will ask whose leadership? In March Mr. Hendry, the Leader of the European Party, invented a slogan against the Ministry, viz., "govern or get out". Britishers in history are far-famed for their political diplomacy and for their interpretative capacity. What is the meaning of the expression "govern"? Is it what the red-hot Tory Premier of England intended for Ireland at the time of the discussion on Glandstone's second Home Rule Bill? "There are some people in the world" exclaimed he, "like the Irish, the Hindu and the Hottentot who are unable to govern themselves. Let England govern Ireland for twenty years and at the end of twenty years Ireland will get some measure of Local Self-Government." Perhaps Lord Salisbury was fond of alliteration, perhaps he had as a supreme trustee of the Indian Empire learned about the "Hindus" from out of the Gentoos of the East India Company. He certainly did not mention the Muslims. I wonder whether the expression used by my honourable friend is like Voltaire's famous definition of Papacy—"the ghost of the Holy Roman Empire sitting crowned on its grave". The food problem in the province led to an artificial cry about an All-Party Government. That All-Party Government has indeed come with the official Muslim League installed in power as a predominent partner. The story of its installation in power is a story on which the sombre and dismal clouds of a rainy season must fall. That story has been narrated in full by my chief, Mr. Fazlul Huq. One day prior to the date fixed for the prorogation of the Budget Session, behind closed doors in the Government House, Mr. Fazlul Huq, according to his public statement, signed a previously prepared type-written sheet of paper tendering his resignation as Chief Minister of the province. On the morning of the 29th March, 1943, the Hon'ble Speaker gave a ruling that with the resignation of the Chief Minister, the Fazlul Huq Ministry No. II had, by operation of law, stood

dissolved. What was the occasion, I have often wondered, for this hasty step taken by the head of the administration in the province? Was it for the purpose of installing an all-parties Ministry called National Ministry by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy with his proposal for inclusion of all parties in the House including the Europeans? Was it in pursuance of a policy which was enunciated by perhaps the greatest Englishman living in England today, namely, that he could not be the first Minister under the Crown to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire? Was the weak, vacillating, uncertain Fazlul Huq Ministry who, in the poetic language of the present Chief Minister, worse than the chaprassies, a hindrance against the pursuit of a noble imperialistic frame of mind? Was there any pursuit of an all-India policy which has led to the installation of Ministries in Assam, North-Western Frontier Province and even in Sind where majorities have been converted into minorities for enabling the rulers of these provinces to govern them? The method adopted not for enabling the past Ministry to govern but for enabling it to get out was thoroughly unconstitutional. The method adopted was contrary to the Instrument of Instructions. On the 29th of March, 1943, Mr. Fazlul Huq certainly did have a majority in the Legislature notwithstanding the wishes and the views of the rulers of the country. On and from 1st April, 1943, Bengal for the first time in its life under the Government of India Act, 1935, enjoyed Government under section 93 of the Government of India Act for more than three weeks. Section 93 was designed and enacted by its parents for the purpose not of curing the alleged follies of Governors of provinces but for the purpose of curing the alleged follies of others. That fancied fabric called "Constitutional Government within the province" melted away on the 1st of April, 1943. The resurrection has indeed come. I should have imagined, my honourable friend the Chief Minister of today would have adopted the same view which more than a century ago was adopted by the Leader of the House of Commons and the Leader of the Opposition of the day when a sailor king of England wanted to dismiss the Prime Minister of the day for the purpose of installing his rival the Opposition Leader as the Premier of England.

I shall watch with interest the performance of the Ministry of the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin. He will not, I trust, engage himself, in his own beautiful language, "in the most despicable and mean way of carrying on the Government" like Mr. Fazlul Huq. His two Caste Hindu colleagues, coming from the same fold as I do, will, I hope, I am quoting his language again, "be worthy of the trust of the powers that be". I hope the Hon'ble the Chief Minister will flourish in their worthy association. I hope he and his colleagues will not be chaprassies like their immediate predecessors in office. I hope they will govern like British Governors of province in India. I shall watch with interest how the delightful programme which the Hon'ble the Chief Minister painted in a fast disappearing canvas, will blossom forth under the brush of a Michael Angelo. I shall watch with interest his enquiries into the allegations into excesses at Dacca and Midnapore. I shall watch with interest the solution of the food problem in the province by my present successor in office. I shall be delighted to hear from his lips that hoarders and speculators do not exist in and around Calcutta. I shall

watch with patience the definition of hoarding and speculation. I hope the Home Minister of the day will not venture to resort to flogging and fourteen years' penal servitude which my honourable friend, Mr. Hendry, mentioned in his speech for hoarders and speculators in Calcutta. I shall listen with rapt attention the story of the unfolding of the result of the food-drive in the province with such fan-flare within the province. While I wait and watch I shall also wonder why my chief who was the Chief Minister of the first Fazlul Huq Ministry is out of office today. Is it because of his bad association in the second Ministry? Is it because of his utterances and pronouncements in the Legislature?? Is it because of his undiplomatic way of advancing the cause of India's freedom? I sat along with my other friends in Opposition to his first Ministry. I was with him in his second administration notwithstanding public criticism. His hands were certainly strengthened by us in his fight for civil liberties. He could not succeed in this conflict. "Victory", the Greek proverb says, "lies in the laps of the gods". I do not forget the other Greek proverb as well—"he laughs the best who laughs the last".

For myself, I shall continue to enjoy the freedom of a divorceé. For I have not forgotten the definition of the "husband" given to us by my honourable friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, in the course of his February food speech before this House. My honourable friend's great knowledge of the kingdom of Zoology should not confine itself merely to the bovine species. Zoology is familiar with other animal species in the animal kingdom as well, and if man is styled as a political animal, Ministers and Governors of provinces may just as well belong to that category. *Te Deum.*

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Thank you, very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this oportunity to speak a few words on this occasion. It is already very late, but the situation is also abnormal and critical. It is difficult to narrate the events leading to the resignation of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq from his Premiership and the part that the Governor of the province played in that drama. One can never believe that the Governor of a province should play the part of a canvasser for the installation of a particular person and a particular party in power. Sir, we knew and we could feel in our day-to-day administration the manner in which the Governor was behaving with us, his Council of Ministers. Mr. Fazlul Huq has already narrated the events that led to his resignation. I am sorry that Mr. Fazlul Huq had to resign his high office without consulting us, his colleagues, but I can never imagine how a Governor of a province should call his Chief Minister in his Chamber and without giving him an opportunity to consult his colleagues coerce him into resigning his high office giving him the assurance that a broadbased and a representative Ministry would be the result of the resignation. It is preposterous that he, the Governor, wanted the Budget to be carried through the Legislature even when the Chief Minister had submitted his resignation. It is needless for me to discuss as to what happened on the floor of this House when Mr. Fazlul Huq had to disclose that he was no longer the Chief Minister, as the whole thing is well-known to the House.

Suffice it to say that we were stunned to hear the narration of the story of the resignation. It was something like a drama and the Governor of the province was the chief actor in that drama. After having secured the resignation of Mr. Fazlul Huq he wanted to treat us, the remaining Ministers, as his Ministers and called us to the Government House. We said that we were *functus officio*. But he wanted us to formally submit our resignations "here and now" in the Government House. We asked His Excellency to send to us in writing what he wanted us to do, and we would also let him know in writing what we would do. We sent our reply in writing and stated that "we are no longer in office and we have ceased to function as Ministers and we declare that we may be treated on that basis". What followed was the promulgation of section 93 of the Government of India Act and the Governor took upon himself the administration of the province. Thereafter a communique was issued from the Government House in which among others it was stated that "His Excellency proposes, as soon as he is satisfied that a stable and representative Ministry is available which commands the confidence of the Legislature and is willing to assume the responsibilities of office, to revoke the proclamation". Thereafter the drama of Ministry-making went on and the cat was out of the bag when it was known that Sir Nazimuddin, the leader of the League Parliamentary Party was asked by His Excellency to explore the possibilities of a stable Ministry and thereafter he was commissioned to form a Ministry. That the constitutional Governor of a province should go out of his way to canvass for a League Ministry some of the prominent Hindu members of the Legislature is unthinkable But anyhow a Ministry was installed and this Ministry was given a lease of life so that they can by patronage and other means strengthen the ministerial party. Things were different when in December, 1941, Mr. Fazlul Huq formed his second Ministry. He was asked to face the Legislature as the League Party wanted and we had to face the Legislature and everybody knows that the League Party had a strength of possibly only 45 members and the League Party had not the courage to test their strength because they knew that they would be nowhere Now, what happened just at the time when Mr. Fazlul Huq's resignation was taken? There were trials of strength between the Government and the League Party assisted by the European Party on several occasions and the Opposition got hollow defeat on each occasion. Then the Governor with the avowed object of driving Mr. Fazlul Huq out of office took recourse to other means and subterfuges. When frontal attacks failed, backdoor methods were used. The Governor succeeded in his object in installing Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin as the Chief Minister of the province. Now, Sir, may I enquire what was the motive behind the whole move? The whole thing must have been done with a plan and with an avowed object behind it. The cry was the same from Whitehall to Delhi and from Delhi to Calcutta. The Amery plan was being worked out everywhere. Sir, in December, 1941, when Sir Nazimuddin, Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy and others were ousted from office they roamed about the countryside, held hundreds of meetings and called Mr. Fazlul Huq a Mir Jafar and a traitor. Now, who was this Mir Jafar? Mir Jafar along with Nanda Kumar, Umichand and others conspired against

Serajdowla and sold this country to the British traders. Mir Jafar became a vassal Nawab and the British became the real masters of this vast land of ours. Even today, Sir, British Imperialism is playing the very same game, only the *modus operandi* being a bit different. After the British became the sovereign power of this country they crushed the Muslim power by all possible, impossible, fair and foul means, dispossessed the Muslim landlords; and this policy of crushing the Muslims was followed throughout the length and breadth of this country, throughout this vast land of ours from 1757 to 1857 when Bahadur Shah, the last Emperor of Delhi was dethroned which was the darkest period for the Muslims of this country, and the Muslims all over India had to drink the bitter cup of humiliation and disgrace. Even then, Sir, in that war of Indian Independence, which is miscalled the Sepoy Mutiny, the Muslims and Hindus of this country fought side by side for their liberation from the foreign yoke. They failed and within another quarter of a century India was completely subjugated and the British became the supreme lord of this sub-continent.

Then, Sir, followed another period. The Hindus who used to be favoured by the British enlightened by Western education and culture began to fight for the rights of the Indian people and therewith the period of reaction began and a little bit of favour of the British began to be showered on the Muslims also. In 1905 Lord Curzon--

Maulvi MD. MOZAMMEL HUQ: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয় আমরা এতক্ষন ধরে আনন্দের সঙ্গে শুনেছি। কিন্তু আর পারি না। আইনে কয়ঘণ্টা আমাদের এখানে বস্‌বার বিধান আছে? আমাদের দয়া করে ছেড়ে দিন কালও উঁরা বোল্‌তে পারেন, আমরা খুশী হোয়ে শুনবো।

Mr. SPEAKER: এটার বাংলায় উত্তর দিতে হবে। কথাটা হোচ্চে এই যে এটা আমার খুশীতে নয়, আপনাদের খুশী। আপনারা যা বলেন, আমি তাই কোরতে রাজি। আমি আপনাদের হুকুম পেয়েছি যে আরো চলুক সেই জন্যই এখনো পর্য্যন্ত চোল্‌ছে।

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: In 1905 Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal with a view ostensibly to favour the Muslims but the real object was political, the object being the driving of a wedge between the two sister communities. The Hindus fought vehemently for the annulment of partition of Bengal. The settled fact was unsettled and the Muslims who helped the British Government in the partition days were pushed into the background.

The policy of British Imperialism is being carried in the same manner except the method being different a little bit at times during the hundred and eighty-six years of British rule.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Shamsuddin, I do not want to disturb you because it appears to me that the entire House is enjoying the speech, but will you kindly just apply yourself to this question: whether the matters that you are now stating are relevant as explanation of your resignation from the Ministry. Will you kindly consider that, and I hope it will not be necessary for me to give any direction.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I am stating these things to explain the Governor's conduct as an administrator.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not asking for an explanation.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Now again we are confronted with a similar critical situation. At a time when the people of India are demanding complete national independence for India, British Imperialists are patting on the back of a set of Muslims under the leadership of Mr. Jinnah who has propounded a two-nation theory—the Muslim Nation and the Hindu Nation—and is clamouring for Pakisthan. From the Secretary of State Mr. Amery down to the Governor of provinces all are blessing the League leader.

Coming to the formation of the present League Ministry in Bengal under the Premiership of Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin we find the same behaviour of the Governor of the province—the same Divide and Rule policy of British Imperialism. The Ministry of Mr. Fazlul Huq was an eye-sore, because that Ministry, composed of the representatives of the various parties in the Legislature, was really a national Ministry. Mr Fazlul Huq pleaded in vain for the expansion of the Cabinet for sixteen months but that was not to be. He wanted the appointment of the Parliamentary Secretaries, but the Governor would pay no heed to that. But, alas, look at the position of the present Ministry. Mr. Fazlul Huq and Sir Nazimuddin are both swarthy natives excepting that they are a little bit different in size and stature. The fortunate Sir Nazimuddin was given thirteen Ministers—unforunately an unlucky number—whether for the mere asking or as a special favour by His Excellency, we need not pry into these secrets, but the fact stands that the Honorary Major got it; nay, something more. Sir Nazimuddin was much more fortunate because he could include his worthy brother Mr. Shahabuddin as a member of the Cabinet. Mr. Fazlul Huq strove for nearly a year and a half for a few Secretaries, but it was a cry in the wilderness, the Great Khwaja got the Parliamentary Secretaries as many as seventeen in number by one stroke of the pen. Now, why this differential treatment? For the clarification of this mystery go back to 1757. If you are prepared to sell your country's rights for a mess of pottage, if you are prepared to be at the beck and call of your European masters—not the masters beyond the seven seas—but the masters nearer home—those of Clive Street, then you will certainly get a few favours here and there. Mr. Speaker, Sir, Clive has gone but Clive Street is there and the host of Mir Jafars, Umichands, Jagat Sets and Rai Durlavs, Raj Ballavs are there and they are as plentiful as black berries in this unfortunate land, only with this difference that the present day Mir Jafars and Jagat Sets are goaded and driven by the merchants of Clive Street. Sir, these European friends of ours,—of course they have left their seats,—sitting on my left are today guiding the destiny of the sixty millions of the unfortunate people of this land, many of whom are not getting a full meal in the course of a week today. Now, Sir, can this Ministry stand for half a second if the twenty-five Europeans who declare they are an independent group withdraw their support? The pity of the whole affair is that those thirteen gentlemen

who are adorning the treasury benches today are not only dependent but very much dependent on these Europeans for their very existence though the Europeans declare that they form an independent group.

Now, Sir, why again is this special favour, because the present Ministry is a subservient tool in the hands of the British Imperialism.

Sir Nazimuddin the other day at a public meeting at the foot of the Ochterlony Monument declared that the Muslim Ministers are pledged to the policy and programme of the all-India Muslim League and that they will not deviate an inch from the policy laid down by the Quade-Azam. Then certainly Pakisthan is the policy of the present Ministry and that is what the British masters want at this hour of national peril when all efforts, all energies and all resources of the nation should have been pooled for achieving complete national independence for India, but instead we are pulling in different directions.

In order to understand more thoroughly the position of this favoured Ministry of Sir John Herbert I refer to a speech delivered by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan while presiding over a conference of Khulna District Muslim Students League a few days ago. He sang *hallelujah* of Pakisthan and assured the Hindus of Bengal that in their regime they would get equal treatment as they used to get at the time of Moghul rule. Preposterous! Mr. Tamizuddin Khan who by tradition, culture and environment should have known and talked only about the krishak projas of Bengal talks about Pakisthan possibly on account of the Khwaja influence. It is certainly an irony of fate.

Sir, before I sit down I shall say a few words about the forced instalment of the present Ministry. The cry of Pakisthan will be kept alive so long as the Imperialists want it, but may I say, Sir, that Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah will stand disillusioned much to his chagrin that the British Government have not granted him Pakisthan as of late he found himself humbled when Mahatmaji's letter was not delivered by the order of the Viceroy to him, though at the Delhi Session of the League this year he vauntingly declared that the Viceroy will not have the courage to stop his letter if only Mahatmaji would only write to him instead of the Viceroy.

Sir, I have finished and I shall not pursue it further. At a time when the enemy is knocking at the eastern gate of India and specially Bengal is the main target, at a time when the co-operation and assistance of every section and party in the country should have been sought not only for the solution of food problem, which is the most vital problem of the day, but also for the stimulation of war efforts, that moment has been chosen as the proper time for the sowing of discord and disunion by the installation of a one-party Ministry in power. The sooner Bengal gets rid of this so-called representative Ministry, the sooner a truly representative Ministry is formed, the sooner a truly national Ministry composed of representatives of different parties in the Legislature is installed in power which can successfully solve the food problem and other problems which are eating into the vitals of the nation, the better for all concered and the better for the whole of Bengal.

I do not want to take any more time of the House, so I resume my seat.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have not been able to follow some of the speeches. I should therefore like to know whether Government is going to ban the publication of the speeches. This is a question which I am asking the Hon'ble Minister through you, Sir, because it concerns a great privilege of the House.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I do not want the time of the House to be wasted. As regards the future, I cannot make any commitment, but so far as these speeches are concerned, their publication will not be stopped.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Thank you

Application for leave of absence.

Mr. ASHUTOSH MULLICK: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do permit Messrs. Sibnath Banerjee, Kamal Krishna Roy, Nikunja Behary Maity, Iswar Chandra Mal, Sukumar Dutta, Dhirendra Nath Dutta and Dhirendra Narayan Mukherjee, representing Howrah (Registered factories), Bankura East, Midnapore South-East, Midnapore South-West, Hooghly South-West, Tippera, and Hooghly North-East constituencies respectively to be absent for the period from the 15th September, 1942, till the end of the Budget Session, 1943, for which they found that they were unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly

The motion was then put and agreed to.

Mr. ASHUTOSH MULLICK: Sir, I also beg to move that this Assembly do permit Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee and Mr. Haripada Chattopadhyay representting Calcutta and Suburbs (Registered factories), and Nadia constituencies respectively to be absent for the period from 15th September, 1942, till the end of the present session for which they find that they are unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly.

The motion was then put and agreed to.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do permit Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose representing Calcutta South General constituency to be absent for the period from 12th February, 1943, till the end of the present session for which he finds that he is unable to attend the meetings of the Assembly.

The motion was then put and agreed to.

ORDINANCE.

The Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Ordinance, 1943.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur. Sir, I beg to lay before the House the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Ordinance, 1943, under section 88 (2) (*a*) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Financial Business.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Sir, in compliance with section 169 of the Government of India Act I beg to lay before the Bengal Legislative Assembly the Appropriation Accounts and the Finance Accounts, for the year 1941-42, together with the Audit Reports thereon. It is usual to present these before the Legislature at the commencement of the Budget Session. This year owing to war conditions the report of the Auditor of India Home Accounts relating to transactions in the United Kingdom was received very late and the Audit Report on the Appropriation Accounts could not be got ready by the Auditor-General before the middle of April last. Hence the delay in presentation.

Statement on Food Situation in Bengal by the Hon'ble Minister, Civil Supplies.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, in the absence of Mr. Suhrawardy may I, with your permission, read the statement which has been laid on the table and distributed among the members? If you will permit me I can read it, or if the House so desire at this late hour that this statement may be taken as read, I shall agree with the House.

With the leave of the House the following statement was taken as read:—

"Before I commence my review of the food situation and of the various steps which have been taken by me and which I propose to take to meet the difficulties which lie ahead of us, I should like to thank the members of the House, the various Party leaders, the vast public and the Press outside who have accorded general support to the measures which we have adopted. There have been criticisms, most of them of a political nature, some of them helpful and many not unuseful, but beneath the stratum of these criticisms there has been generally an appreciation of the fact that the present Ministry are doing their level best and taking whatever steps are possible to be taken within the time that they have had at their disposal to meet the difficult situation. No Ministry can ask for more than this and I trust that the food problem will be approached from all sides from the point of view of a great co-operative endeavour to alleviate the distress of suffering humanity.

It must be admitted that we took office at a most critical and difficult moment. I have no desire to comment on the shortcomings of our predecessors in office as this has already formed the subject matter of several debates and recriminations and placing the blame on others will not be the right type of atmosphere in which to discuss this very serious problem. When we came into office we were faced with utter unpreparedness for the coming crisis. The rise in prices and the panic amongst the people was a clear sign that dangers were ahead in the months of Jaishta and Ashar and until such time as the aus crop would be cut with its temporary alleviation

of the situation in some areas. There was no Government stock and no reserves. Whatever was purchased was spent on the priority undertakings in Calcutta. I do not blame anyone for this state of affairs. The conditions were such that no other position seemed possible. No reserves had been built up in what were going to be dangerous deficit areas. In fact there did not seem to be any appreciation of the dangers ahead of us or even of what were the areas which would need our assistance. Hoarding and black-marketing and other anti-social activities were widely prevalent. The trade appeared to have frozen in its tracks, and flourished on permits. Hardly any grain was being brought into the markets and prices were being pushed up for no rhyme or reason without any genuine transaction taking place. Local controls which had merely aggravated the situation in deficit areas had been abolished and it was beginning to be widely realised that the situation could not be relieved adequately unless the surplus grains of the neighbouring Provinces and the Eastern States were allowed to flow into Bengal and we were being advised from all sides to take steps to have the provincial barriers dropped. Our first act, therefore, was to abolish the zonal barriers which were impeding the distribution of rice and whose existence perpetuated the system of permits which was so liable to abuse. With the possibility of the movement of grains from surplus to deficit areas there was a definite arrest in the rise in prices. Along with it the enunciation of a clear cut policy directed against hoarding and black-marketing prevented further speculation in prices. There were two major factors that we had to deal with: one panic brought about by insistence on shortages, and the other greed brought about by speculative rise in prices. Both of them led to hoarding and maldistribution. These two complexes had first to be counteracted if we were to secure movement of food-grains and make rice accessible to the people. I have found criticisms levelled against me that I had stated that there was no shortage when actually there was serious shortage in the Province. I do not plead guilty to the charge. It appeared to me that insistence on shortages would only increase panic and stimulate hoarding and thereby aggravate the general food scarcity and push up prices. I therefore refused to discuss the question and on the basis of the information at my disposal and the promises made by the Government of India regarding regular supply of foodstuffs from outside I was able to state with a clear conscience that there was or would be sufficiency and there was no need for panic. The gap between supplies and consumption was being narrowed by the smaller consumption brought about by high prices. Food grains were coming into Bengal and more were being promised. But in spite of all the grains that might be sent to us, the situation could not be met unless and until there was equitable distribution of the food-grains within the Province and the panic and the greed complexes were sufficiently counteracted. If this was not done, then any amount of food-granis coming in from outside would again go into hoards. My doctrine of sufficiency therefore depended upon firstly equitable distribution within the Province, and secondly sufficient supplies from outside and I still maintain that if the assumptions that I had then made had fructified and may still fructify, we shall have sufficiency within the Province. Of course that sufficiency will not be in rice considered by itself.

But we can have it if the rice is supplemented by other food-grains such as wheat, bajra, joar, lentils and gram of which we can hope to get sufficient quantities from the surplus areas.

But whether we get resources from outside or not it was incumbent on us to utilize our own internal resources to the best possible advantage. We had to do the best that we could with whatever was at our disposal. The resources from outside could only be supplementary. For this purpose we took steps to tighten the Food Grains Control Order. Instructions were issued to requisition stocks of traders who had committed an offence under the Food Grains Control Order either by not taking out a licence or by misdeclaring or refraining from declaring their stocks or not maintaining accounts as required by that order. The offender was then to be prosecuted and the Courts pressed for forfeiture of his stocks. If the Courts ordered forfeiture, no compensation would be paid for the stocks requisitioned; if they did not, compensation would be paid at such rates as Government considered fair. As regards traders who had committed no offence under the Food Grains Control Order but were either withholding their stocks from the market or refraining from importing stocks into deficit areas with the object of keeping up local prices, they were severely warned that if they did not release substantial quantities of their stocks for sale at reasonable intervals or if they persisted in refraining from importing supplies from outside in reasonable quantities, their licenses would be cancelled and their stocks requisitioned at prices which Government considered fair. We could take this step as under the Food Grains Control Order failure to comply with any directions issued by the licensing authorities to traders regarding the release of the stock is punishable. District Magistrates were also requested to send for landlords known to hold stocks of rice or paddy and to impress on them the importance in their own interests of coming to the rescue of their countrymen by selling, loaning or otherwise distributing their stocks to those in distress, and to warn them that failing this Government might be obliged to requisition their stocks at prices which Government might consider reasonable. Large agriculturists were similarly sent for and warned, requested or cajoled into liquefying their stocks. To secure liquefaction of the general stocks held in the country, a great Food Drive was undertaken. It came at a psychological moment. While stocks were being held by the larger agriculturists, a growing section of the population which was unable to purchase rice at the high level at which the prices had been pushed were roaming about the country in search of food. The situation had become tense and looting of granaries and stocks in movement was of common occurrence. Equitable distribution was the only solution and a colossal operation far bigger in magnitude than anything of the kind that the Government of Bengal had ever undertaken was launched. The main purpose of the Drive was to undertake an anti-hoarding campaign throughout the Province, to compile a complete census of food requirements, of food stocks, of seeds and seed requirements, of lands, cultivation, cattle, etc., to organise food committees on a territorial basis and to bring about through the food committees a more equitable distribution of food. The Food Drive was launched simultaneously

throughout the Province between the 7th and the 20th of June. Calcutta and Howrah were left out of the Food Drive for administrative reasons. But even while launching the drive I made it clear that their turn too would come and their stocks too would be duly taken and dealt with. Preparations for this are well under way. The whole Province was divided into roughly 3,000 units each consisting of two unions in the rural areas, and of convenient wards with approximately 3,000 to 4,000 houses in the municipal areas.

Each unit was placed under the charge of a squad-master with 8 primary workers, of whom 4 were drawn from the cadre of official subordinates and 4 from amongst the enthusiastic and public-spirited non-officials. Each unit was further sub-divided into four sub-units each consisting of 8 to 10 villages or mohallas of 100 to 150 houses each. Each sub-unit was placed under the charge of one official subordinate and one non-official working jointly. Representative public meetings were held in each unit in the evening preceding the day of the commencement of the Drive and the objects were discussed and explained. On the day of commencement as the primary workers took up a particular village or mohalla, meetings were held and the entire adult male population invited to attend. After these meetings representative committees consisting of 12 members were constituted for each village or mohalla in consultation with and with the approval of the majority of persons living within the village or mohalla, as the case may be. No restrictions of any kind were imposed on any one because of any political or party affiliations; on the contrary, workers had definite and clear instructions that the Committees should be representative of the various sections in the village and should preferably have a majority of the enlightened poor. And, I can say that though it would be impossible to guarantee that the instructions were carried out in letter and spirit, in every single case, there is no doubt that in the overwhelming majority of cases, these instructions have been carried out and the Committees have been constituted as desired.

After the Committees had been so constituted, each member of the Committees was given an oath of honesty and social service and the Committee were then asked to elect their own office-bearers consisting of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, one or two Joint Secretaries, one Treasurer and one Auditor.

In consultation with the Committee, primary workers then selected the principal and most well-to-do families in the village and took up the necessary enquiries and verification of stocks themselves. The rest of the work was left to the Food Committees, the members working in two groups, and after the balance sheets had been completed by the Committees, the primary workers again verified 10 per cent. of the entries selected at random.

Simultaneously with this the workers confidentially collected information about hoarders in other villages and kept on doing the same for the next 3 or 4 days. Thereafter, a special drive against hoarders was launched between the 10th and the 12th of June. These stocks were carefully checked and estimated and hoarders were persuaded either to lend the surplus to their

needy brethren in the village or to put the same in the market for sale reasonable prices. Where the stocks were over 400 maunds, notices w served to freeze the stocks temporarily.

In this manner, the work proceeded; and finally from village to uni from union to thana, subdivision and district, a complete balance sheet population, food requirements, the stock in hand, seeds in hand or requir area of Aman land cultivated last year and to be cultivated this year, a of Aus land cultivated this year, number of cattle and landless families being prepared and consolidated. We have thus been able to secure set of most useful statistics without which we would have continued to gro in the dark and without which no scientific food planning and prop administration of food control could be organised.

I hope Hon'ble Members will, therefore, agree with me that before proceed further, I should record my sincere appreciation of the services those, both officials and non-officials, who at great inconvenience to the selves have made this Drive possible. As many as 30,000 squadmasters a primary workers had to be mobilised for the purpose and hundreds officers and subordinates had to be temporarily shifted from one part the Province to the other to make up local shortages in personnel. Almo every Government office in Calcutta was requested and made its contributi and finally the Hon'ble the High Court also were pleased to allow 40 p cent. of their clerical staff throughout the Province to be used for t purpose. Members of the District Boards and Commissioners of Mun cipalities, Professors of colleges and teachers of schools of all grade Honorary Magistrates, Union Boards, District Boards, Union Jute Co mittees, in short, public-spirited non-officials of all grades made the contribution. No less was the contribution made by approximately million members of the Food Committee. Indeed, but for their since and active co-operation, such a comprehensive census could never have bee completed.

And all this had to be organised in the course of a bare 3 weeks, instru tions drafted and more than a couple of millions of forms with oth literature despatched to every nook and corner of the Province.

I have therefore no doubt that honourable Members will join with me i expressing our sincere and heartful thanks to all the officers who have don their utmost and in particular to all the non-official gentlemen many o whom undertook arduous journeys and spent a long fortnight in the village for this great service of humanity. In particular, I wish to voice m appreciation of the work put in by the Special Officer, Mr. H. S. M. Ishaque I.C.S., whose untiring zeal and energy have been mainly responsible fo the success of the Drive.

As regards the result, the Drive has achieved one great thing. It ha restored confidence amongst the poor and has transferred the panic to th minds of the hoarders. Before even the Drive started persons who hel stocks actually sent for their poorer neighbours and lent them sufficien quantities of rice, paddy and gram and other grain stocks. The situatio was immediately eased and grain began to flow once more into the marke

and persons who could not procure food were enabled to purchase rice in the market. The price fell rapidly, but the main achievement was that considerable stocks were thus circulated amongst the poor. It is difficult to estimate the amount, but it can easily be put down in the region of 7 to 8 million maunds which approximately equals the quantity that has been discovered in hoards. The Drive also proceeded smoothly. All the various fears that were being entertained of its being utilised for political purposes have been falsified. There have been no disturbances and nearly a lakh of committees have been formed composed of public spirited citizens who are prepared to co-operate with any sincere measure for the purpose of meeting the situation. Frankly, Sir, I am greatly satisfied with the result. I feel that if honest and sincere steps are taken the public of Bengal will co-operate. The heart of the people is sound and I hope I shall be pardoned for saying so; I feel that it beats with us. But the work of the food committees has but just begun. Through their instrumentality a considerable amount of food has been distributed. The standard of requirements of each family has been laid down depending on whether they are surplus, whether they have some stocks or whether they have no stocks. A surplus holder is encouraged to lend his stocks directly to his neighbour. The committee's duty is to see that no more than is actually required is lent. If he is not agreeable to lend, he may be prepared to sell at reasonable rates fixed by the committee. The committee will supervise such sales, taking care again that too much is not sold to any one family. If the surplus holder is not prepared either to loan directly or sell directly but would prefer to hold the committee responsible, he may lend or sell his stocks to the committee which in its turn will lend to those in need. The borrowers will return one and a half times the quantity borrowed to the committee after the next harvest and the committee will return to the original lender one and a quarter times the quantity lent to it. The margin is intended to cover any bad debts that may have to be written off. Some committees have even been able to raise funds amongst themselves and have bought up a portion of the crop in order to sell it to others or for distribution as charity. Where a surplus holder is recalcitrant and refuses to lend or sell his stock, the committee may report this fact to the District Magistrate or the Subdivisional Officer who will requisition the surplus. In assessing the surplus of a family, its requirements until the next harvest have been taken into consideration and an extra 10 per cent. has been left to meet its miscellaneous requirements such as payment of dues, purchase of cloth, etc. I intend to set up such a food committee for every thana, subdivision and district to advise on the food situation generally of their areas and to assist in the supervision and adjustment of claims of the various units within their jurisdiction. I earnestly trust that these committees will become an essential part of the economic life of the Province and an essential feature of our organisation. It is possible that later on they may be given statutory recognition and I intend to utilise them fully to keep Government informed of any distress or difficulties in any local area and to take up the necessary relief work, the distribution of seeds, the work of crop census and crop planning, development of small irrigation and drainage schemes, introduction of manuring

and composting, adult education, general sanitation and maintenance and establishment of dharmagolas, and all such other measures and programmes as may be found possible to entrust them with in the interest of future improvement and development of the rural areas. In one word I hope that these food committees will develop into permanent Pallimangal Samities. In course of time too I hope that with proper training and improvement they will develop themselves into genuine consumers' and producers' co-operative sale and supply agencies, and I earnestly trust that the day shall dawn when the Province of Bengal will become one solidly united and well-knit and well-organised co-operative union.

To come back, however, to the present: Side by side with the Food Drive I had issued instructions to requisition 25 per cent. of all stocks above 300 maunds subject to no stock falling below 300 maunds. District Officers and Subdivisional Officers were given liberty to freeze and requisition a larger percentage if the requirements of the area and the disinclination of the stockists to unload required it. In this way I have built up small stocks all over the Province which will be available to Government to meet local needs and demands or the demands of deficit areas close by. Transport difficulties prevent large movement of grains and it is not always possible to send stocks from Calcutta to the areas which are deficit. It is hoped that these stocks scattered all over the country will assist in some measure in feeding those areas where the need is great and the stock is little. Officers are being authorised to requisition surplus stocks and to remove them either directly or through traders to areas which are deficit and sell them at a controlled rate. All stocks therefore purchased by Government or requisitioned as stated above as well as stocks requisitioned from traders who have committed offences under the Food Grains Control Order are to go into a pool from which the needs of the deficit areas will be met by retail sale through controlled shops at the rate of Rs. 9 per maund for paddy and Rs. 15 for rice, for payment of test relief wages in kind, and for gratuitous relief in the form of cooked or raw food. Detailed plans for meeting the needs of the deficit areas and for the distribution of distress relief in kind are being drawn up in consultation with Divisional Commissioners and District Officers. Detailed instructions have also been issued to all the food committees to organise relief kitchens in their areas. Whatever may be the stock position, whatever the shortage or sufficiency in the Province, there can be no doubt that the continued high prices have and must result in rice and food-grains receding from the capacity of a section of the population which are always in difficulties at this time of the year, and particularly of those who have had always to depend on the charity and the surpluses of the general population. Gratuitous relief will therefore have to be undertaken on a large scale and it is clear that under the present circumstances gratuitous relief should as far as possible be undertaken in kind. As rice and food-grains in sufficient quantities are difficult to procure, I have suggested the establishment of relief kitchens, distributing a gruel of rice, dal, millet and vegetables, through which we shall be able to supply a much larger number of people from a given stock of food-grain than would have benefited if the grain had been distributed

in the raw form. Although it is not a question of civil supplies or pertaining to my Department, I take this opportunity of stating that we propose taking all possible steps to meet the situation which has arisen owing to the shortage of food-grains. Agricultural loans in substantial quantities have been distributed in cash and, it is hoped, provided the necessary assistance is forthcoming from the Government of India, more loans will be distributed to enable the agriculturist to purchase seeds, cattle and pay for his cultivation expenses. Government, however, are of the opinion that as far as possible agricultural loans should also be given in kind which the agriculturist may utilise partly for maintenance and partly to pay for and feed his labourers. Test relief works have similarly been undertaken on a large scale and are being extended except in so far as they will not interfere with agricultural operations. Payment for test relief has been in cash and it is proposed to have it in kind as far as possible. Gratuitous relief similarly will be given on a large scale as justified by present circumstances, but as far as possible in kind. All these measures which I have hitherto detailed are those that we have undertaken for the best utilization of our own resources. But it is clear that without augmentation of the Provincial resources by foodstuffs from other Provinces, it will not be possible to meet our requirements.

This fact was realized by the Government of India when they formulated what is now formally known as the basic plan. They made assessment of the surplus of food-grains of the various Provinces, accepted responsibility for feeding the deficit areas and assigned the surplus produce of definite areas for the benefit of the deficit areas. Each Provincial Government was expected to fall in line with the assessment policy and plan of the Government of India and agree to shift the requisite amount of food-grains. Provincial Governments that were considered to be surplus were called upon to set up their own purchasing organizations and shift the requisite amount of food-grains. Unfortunately the progress was not so substantial as the Government of India had planned and a time came when it became clearly manifest that these surplus Provincial Governments had no intention to act according to the basic plan. The needs of Bengal and particularly of the consuming areas of Calcutta and Howrah, and the cyclone-stricken areas and other grossly deficit areas had to be met and supplies needed to be poured into Bengal in larger and larger quantities as the season advanced and the local resources diminished. The Government of India could not guarantee that the basic plan, particularly in the matter of rice, would be fulfilled, far less could they promise that during these crucial months we would receive any larger proportion than our monthly quota. Free trade was the only solution by which the reluctance of the neighbouring Provincial Governments could be overcome, and free trade was accordingly resorted to. What followed is well known. The neighbouring Provincial Governments did everything possible to defeat free trade and requisitioned all visible stocks to provide their security services, their deficit areas and their controlled shops with cheap food-grains without being a burden on the Provincial or Central revenues. On the other hand, the prospect of free trade stimulated both their merchants and our merchants to bring rice into

Bengal. The demand and competition that would have spent itself on the existing food-grains concentrated on such stocks as had been overlooked and which escaped the vigilance of the local officers or the pressure of public opinion aroused in those areas. Prices rapidly rose, even without the movement of a single grain into Bengal. Far be it from me to criticise the policy of the neighbouring Provinces—particularly as it seems to have been appreciated by their own people—as we still remain very much dependant on their goodwill and co-operation. Nevertheless, I feel that if they could have taken courage to give free trade a chance, it would in the end have been better for themselves and ourselves. Some grain would certainly have come into Bengal; prices would surely have fallen. They could never prevail at this height, either here or in the neighbouring Provinces, and the fall in Bengal prices would have brought about a fall in their prices and thus prices would have reached a level which both they and we could have afforded. What is taking place now is that excepting some stock of food-grains which these Governments have obtained at a cheap rate, the price of rice in their areas has risen almost to the Bengal level and those of their people whom they will not be able to meet with their controlled shops will soon be in difficulties. I hope and trust that even now these Governments will shed their parochial instincts and will come to the assistance of Bengal in a larger measure—an assistance, which I am certain, Bengal will repay in its own turn with that generosity which has made our Province the home and hunting ground of all the races and the people of India. Nevertheless, in spite of obstructions, free trade has been able to achieve some fare which has made the people trade-minded and encouraged movement of food-grains. Stocks are beginning to flow. The trickle from the neighbouring Provinces has started and our supplies are being slowly but surely augmented. The burden on Government is also now less. The responsibility that it had undertaken to supply rice to the industries has been shed under the free trade plan and thus industries have been asked to make their own preparations in order to feed their labour. True that the position is not very satisfactory. If the purchases are made within the Province this would not lead to augmentation of our resources. There have been some such purchases but on the whole every attempt has been made to make purchases from outside our Province again with the result that our Provincial resources have been augmented. Government too have taken this opportunity to secure supplies in order to feed the rural areas. I am devoting the major proportion of our resources for sending food-grains to the rural areas which stand in so much need of our assistance. Under the advice of the Government of India and with their concurrence we have set up a purchasing organization to purchase food-grains from the Eastern Zone in order to meet our requirements. This organization had to be set up at once if we were to take advantage of the free trade plan and we had to look round for a suitable agent or agents. After consulting various merchants and chambers we could find no one who could undertake the task better than Messrs. M. A. Ispahani. An organization was necessary which could cover at the shortest possible notice the entire Eastern region and would have the stamina to face the difficulties of the situation and the opposition of the

other Governments, and at the same time had that knowledge of business and trade which could combine procurement of supplies with purchases in the cheapest market. The reputation of the firm for reliability, honesty and integrity was unimpeachable. They were second to none in their business capacity. From all sides I received the advice that theirs was the only firm that could deliver the goods. Their sympathy with the Muslim League was well-known and I had to consider seriously whether if I entrusted them with this great task I would not be open to the charge of supporting a political sympathiser. The urgent needs of Bengal, however, the vital necessity of procuring supplies at the shortest possible notice, the needs of our distressed people who must be provided with food outweighed my hesitation and I took the risk of calling upon the firm to come to the assistance of the people of Bengal and undertake this great responsibility. I called upon it to make the great sacrifice of placing all its stocks at the disposal of the Bengal Government at cost price, to subject its contracts and accounts to the scrutiny of the Accountant-General, Bengal, to submit to a running audit of the accounts and to charge a commission which was less than the commission paid by the other Provincial Governments to their agents. Mr. M. A. Ispahani took time to consider this onerous offer and I wish to pay a tribute to his generous and sentimental temperament when in the interests of the people of this Province and in order to make our policy a success he placed himself and his entire stocks at our disposal and at one stroke of pen agreed to forego a profit of some 40 lakhs of rupees on the stocks which he possessed. I have had no cause since then to regret my decision and with a single-minded purpose he has worked for the success of the mission he has undertaken and has gradually closed down many of his agencies which were far more remunerative in order to devote himself to this task. He has been able to purchase stocks which I could scarcely have hoped for and today fortunately Bengal Government is in a position to send considerable stocks of grain to its deficit rural areas in spite of the grave opposition from the neighbouring Provinces which we have encountered.

From this however it must not be understood that we are out of the wood. I claim that we have done the best that was possible for any Government to do under the prevailing circumstances. Hesitation and vacillation would have been ruinous. We have been able to augment our supplies; our agents have succeeded in setting up an organization that is in a position to shift food-grains into Bengal; but it will be easy optimism if we are to rest on our oars when supplies are by no means sufficient. Whatever stocks we can get we shall have to wrest grain by grain from reluctant neighbouring administrations while acute, heartrending and appalling distress stares us in the face. I can see no other alternative but to continue to press on the Government of India for sending us more and more food-grains in an ever-growing stream, and I am certain that the Government of India, who have undertaken the responsibility to feed this deficit Province and who cannot be unconscious of the necessity of saving from famine a Province which will form the advance base of future military operations, will come to our rescue. The immediate augmentation of supplies therein is a dire necessity and this

Government has left no stone unturned, and I personally have spared no pains, to impress this on our neighbours and the Government of India. I wish my voice could reach directly to His Majesty's Government and the Governments of the United Nations, as I would obviously be only too happy to secure supplies from as many sources as possible. I do not think however that our importunities, prayers and demands will fall or have fallen on deaf ears and that the Government of India will rise equal to the occasion and fulfil their primary responsibilities and take every possible step to see that Bengal has a sufficiency of food which it needs to alleviate its present distress.

Turning now to Calcutta and other urban areas in the mofussil which present their own peculiar problems: The controlled shops in Calcutta have done their work but it is becoming increasingly difficult to supervise them. They are no longer meeting the requirements of the localities which they were intended to serve. Anyone may purchase who can stand in a queue and brave the inconvenience. It is most desirable that any shops that we may set up should be properly supervised, and that they should serve a definite locality. For this purpose it has been decided to set up Government distributing centres which will issue supplies only to those persons who hold ration cards and reside in the area which they are intended to serve. These Government distributing centres will distribute all the controlled commodities either in exclusion of or in conjunction with the trade. As a beginning, it has been proposed to ration messing groups in receipt of an average *per capita* income of Rs. 20 per mensem or less so far as rice is concerned. Other articles of food will also be supplied through these shops to persons living within the zone served by that particular distributing centre. Until the question of free trade is settled, it is not possible for me to give a promise for wholesale rationing of Calcutta unless I see supplies ahead of me. It will be rash, imprudent and wholly illogical if I were for political reasons to be stampeded into an announcement for the wholesale rationing of Calcutta unless I was certain of supplies. As things however are shaping, I feel that we shall be in a position to adopt this policy at an early date as this will prevent wastage and unequal consumption. I intend to start firstly with the poorer localities as it is there that the need for subsidized rice and regular supplies is the greatest, and then extend the operations to cover the whole of Calcutta and then to industrial areas round Calcutta. As I have said above, I propose to work through Government distributing centres which will be an economical proposition. In mofussil towns, rationing should similarly take place, not necessarily through Government distributing centres, but through the trade or responsible persons or organisations such as co-operative organizations who may be considered to be reliable and imbued with sufficient spirit of social service so as not to black-market the supplies that will be placed at their disposal in the rural areas. For the time being, persons enumerated in the employers' shops groups in the last census undertaken through the courtesy and collaboration of the A. R. P. Services will be excluded and the responsibility for issuing supplies to them will continue to vest in the employers. By this I should not be understood to mean that the employers will be permitted to stock as

much rice as they may although we welcome the most frantic efforts on their part to secure as much supplies as they can from outside the province. We have accordingly once more brought to the notice of the employers that everyone having a stock of 20 maunds of food-grains, even though it is meant for distribution to the employees, must take out a licence under the Food Grains Control Order and must submit monthly returns of stocks held as required from the traders. We have also made it clear that other persons, *e.g.*, private consumers, having a stock of more than 50 maunds will be presumed under the Food Grains Control Order to be traders, and it will be advisable for them as well to take out licences under the Food Grains Control Order. The employers however are today bound, under awards of the Labour Commissioner, to make available fixed quotas of supplies to their labourers at specified rates. Now that the inter-provincial barriers have been dropped they have been advised to make their own purchases in the Eastern Zone, particularly in the provinces outside, Government undertaking to give every assistance, if through no fault of their own, they are unable to secure the necessary supplies. Later on, I hope that the distributing centres which I am setting up, will cater for people with higher income, but supplies of rice will be made at market rates. Other controlled commodities such as atta, sugar, salt, kerosene and mustard oil and even uncontrolled commodities such as dal will be made available as soon as necessary arrangements are made to ration cardholders irrespective of their income.

While we have concentrated on getting all possible supplies from outside by all the means in our power and also on securing equitable distribution within the Province and taking steps against all anti-social activities and to organize Bengal to meet the distress looming ahead, we have taken further steps to encourage the growth of more food. As an immediate proposition, people are being advised to grow more vegetables and are being given every assistance wherever possible. Arrangements have been made for the distribution of vegetable seeds in Calcutta and every householder who has a patch of ground fallow has been exhorted to grow vegetables on it. It is encouraging to find that many householders have accepted this advice and that the lawns of Government House have been turned into vegetable gardens. District Officers have similarly been advised to encourage cultivation of food crops in the rural areas. Irrigation and drainage schemes are under consideration for bringing as much of the fallow lands as possible under paddy. Agricultural loans will be given out liberally to those who need them for extending the cultivation of food crops and paddy seeds in requisite quantities will, if necessary, be requisitioned for distribution among those who require them. In fact, some time back when it appeared that there was scarcity of aus seed, District Officers were authorised by me to requisition locally whatever quantities of aus seed they required and distribute it to those who needed the seed at Rs. 12 per maund. The statistical and intelligence machinery of the Government have also been strengthened and re-organised. It is most essential that Government should have up-to-date information of the supply and price position of the Province and other reliable data in the light of which they could shape their food policy. Indeed, one of the most serious difficulties that this Government have had

to face in working out their food policy has been the almost incomplete absence of reliable statistics on the basis of which alone any satisfactory supply and distribution plans could be drawn up. The statistical organization at headquarters is being strengthened and it is hoped with the assistance of Government officers and of food committees to obtain more reliable statistics as to the area of land on which food crops are grown, crop conditions, market tendencies, local stock position, extent of local shortage, etc.

In this statement of mine I have dealt with the subject more or less in its bare outline in the hope that it will give some indication of the colossal amount of work which we have put in to meet a situation which is deteriorating so rapidly that it was recognized to be beyond remedy. I feel that our labours have not been in vain and the steps that we have taken from time to time have arrested the deterioration at the most crucial moments. I hope that the work which we have put in will also bear more substantial fruit and that the situation will be brought under control. Government however will not relax their efforts in the slightest degree so long as the present unfortunate conditions continue to operate, and I am sure that if we are permitted to serve you and the people of Bengal the work will be carried out with the most single-hearted devotion to duty. I do not think that this is the time or the opportunity to talk about future. The present is with us in all its hideousness and the problem that it presents itself is so vast that it needs all our resources to grapple with it. I have not however forgotten the necessity of having a programme for the future. The people of Bengal must not be caught unprepared again: they must not be allowed to be at the mercy of traders, hoarders, speculators and black-marketers who would gladly grind the faces of the poor in order to earn a profit which they possibly had not dreamt of in their palmiest days. I aim at the ultimate establishment of producers' and consumers' societies but we have to proceed step by step. Perhaps for the next year, it will suffice if Government were from the very beginning to assure the cultivator a fair price for his commodity, to take up the surplus crop and stock it, reserve it and where necessary sell it at a rate which will cover its costs and perhaps provide a fund for the development of agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have done. I trust and hope that the House will accord that sympathy and support which the public in the past have given to us. I hope, Sir, that the House will not be too hard on me in its appreciation or depreciation of the work which I have put in on behalf of the people of this Province. The task has been a difficult one. If I have not pleased the members of this House, I have, at any rate, a satisfaction of my conscience that I have not spared myself in the slightest degree in carrying out my task."

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I just enquire of the Chief Minister if Government propose as a sequal to this statement to bring in a motion before the House for debate on the food situation?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If the House wants a debate then it is for the members of the Opposition to give notice of amendments.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: As matters stand the House is aware that the Opposition have expressed their desire for a debate and three days have been very kindly allotted for the same purpose. I was just wondering if the procedure should be as in the previous case that Government will bring in a motion, or the Government desire the Opposition to move substantive motions and then the Government will deal with it.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: We don't propose to move any motion. The Opposition, if they so desire, can move a motion on the matter. There may be amendments or may not be amendments. It will all depend on the motion that is moved.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to know what would be the procedure. Dr. Sanyal, do you want to move a motion?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We have now the statement. On the basis of that statement, we of the Opposition propose to move motions which will be dealt with on their merits. The Government might oppose them as a whole or move their own amendments.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that the Opposition will send in motions and that Government, if they are so advised, will send in amendments. By what time, can I expect these motions?

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: What would be the last date for sending in motions?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We want about four days. I suggest that Thursday, the 8th instant, may be the last date for sending in motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am prepared to agree to that.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: For the amendments I suggest Saturday, the 10th.

Mr. SPEAKER: I take it that that procedure is agreed to.

(Members agreed.)

Adjournment.

It being 9-20 p.m., the House was adjourned till 4 p.m. on Tuesday, the 6th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 6th July, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 200 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Filling up of the post of Inspector of Smoke Nuisance.

*13. **Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department aware—

(*i*) that a post of the Inspector of Smoke Nuisances Service was advertised in the *Calcutta Gazette* in the month of August, 1942; and

(*ii*) that the post was reserved for a Muslim?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) how many Muslim candidates with minimum requisite qualifications applied for the post; and

(*ii*) whether there were some Muslim B.E. candidates for the post?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason why the post is still left vacant?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) who is holding the post at present; and

(*ii*) what are his qualifications?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the qualifications as advertised for in the *Calcutta Gazette* are similar to those of the candidate who is officiating at present?

(*f*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate to fill up the post by a non-Muslim?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Only one Muslim candidate applied for the post. He did not possess the requisite qualifications. The Public Service Commission do not agree to furnish further materials as they are of opinion that the methods adopted by them in making the selection should not be open to discussion for criticism on the floor of the House.

(*c*) and (*d*) Mr. D. P. Ganguly has been appointed temporarily to the post. A statement of the qualifications is laid on the Table.

(*e*) A statement of the qualifications advertised for is laid on the Table.

(*f*) As a suitable Muslim candidate is not available, the vacancy which is a temporary one will have to be filled up by the best available candidate irrespective of community.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (d) (ii) of starred question No. 13.

(1) Passed the Junior Cambridge Examination with Distinction from Victoria European Boys' School, Kurseong, in 1931.

(2) Passed the Senior Cambridge Examination attaining Honours Standard from the same Institution in 1933.

(3) Passed the Board of Apprenticeship Training Admission Examination in First Class.

(4) Served as an Apprentice in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Messrs. Burn & Company, Limited, for over 4 years.

(5) Attended the Calcutta Technical School in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Course for about 4 years, and passed the Final Examination in Mechanical Engineering held under the Board of Apprenticeship.

(6) Membership of the Institution of Engineers (India).

(7) Worked as Foreman in charge at the Bengal Government Sawmill for about 9 months.

(8) Worked as Smoke Observer under the Bengal Smoke Nuisances Commission for over 3½ years, and acquired considerable knowledge of mechanical appliances used for the abatement of smoke.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (e) of starred question No. 13.

(*i*) the candidate must be not more than 30 years of age;

(*ii*) must have a practical apprenticeship for at least five years in a recognised workshop, preferably marine;

(*iii*) must have sound knowledge of the designing, operating and testing of all classes of industrial furnaces; marine and land, by using all grades of solid and pulverised fuels, light fuels, oil fuels and gas;

(*iv*) must have thorough knowledge of the best means of securing smoke reduction and increasing efficiency; and

(*v*) must be a native of the Province of Bengal or domiciled in Bengal.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: On a point of privilege, Sir. With reference to the answer given in (*b*), namely, that the Public Service Commission do not agree to furnish further materials as they are of opinion that the methods adopted by them in making the selection should not be open to discussion or criticism on the floor of the House, I consider that this is a curtailment of the rights and privileges of this House. The Public Service Commission is a subordinate department of Government and as such Government is bound to furnish information asked for on this point.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, the Public Service Commission has got a statutory position and so far as the attitude they have taken up is concerned, it is apparent that they are not prepared to give further materials. Of course, it is for the House to judge whether this affects the privilege of the House.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: The Public Service Commission is a subordinate limb of the Government and as such Government is bound to furnish all information relating to the activities of the Public Service Commission to this Legislature.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it is more or less a question of privilege of this House, and it is a matter which certainly requires looking into. I do not, however, propose to express any opinion just now, but I will consider this matter and, if necessary, I may refer it to the Privilege Committee.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: In that case, Sir, I submit that this question be treated as being held over or as not being answered at all.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, that cannot be the case. This is the answer given to the House because this is the exact position. But after hearing this if the House wants to form an opinion of its own, that is a different matter altogether. We have placed the fact before the House and we cannot do any further.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: May I have your ruling on the question I have now raised, Sir, namely, that the question should be held over for the present?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Speaker can compel a Minister to give a particular answer. The Government says that this is their answer and the question of privilege of the House undoubtedly stands and may be considered by this House. As I have reserved my opinion for the present on the question of privilege and as I wish to consult the Committee of Privilege, I think the House for the time being should accept this as the answer of Government subject, of course, to their subsequent opinion.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state for what period the appointment has been made?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I want notice.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether when the temporary period is over Government have in their contemplation to appoint a Muslim candidate?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Government will make another attempt to see if a suitable Muslim is available.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Mr. D. P. Ganguly was next in office to those who were promoted?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: No question of promotion arises here. He was given the post on a temporary basis.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), do I understand the Government to say that they agree with the opinion of the Public Service Commission, namely, that the methods adopted by them in making the selection should not be open to discussion for the criticism of this House? Do the Government agree with that opinion?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I have already answered that it is a matter of opinion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The answer given is a fact and the opinion here also is a fact. They want to know what opinion Government hold on this matter. I think that is also a fact.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: In that case, Sir, I want notice.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Sir, Government would be glad to give their opinion on the methods adopted by the Public Service Commission. But, as matters stand, we cannot compel the Public Service Commission to give way in a matter in which the Commission have arrived at a decision.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: May I submit, Sir, that when such meaningless answers are being made by the Parliamentary Secretary, the Minister concerned should answer and not his Parliamentary Secretary.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not for me to say whether the answer is meaningless or not. Here you prefer that the Minister should answer and the Minister has actually answered.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is desirable to move in the matter and place it before the Privilege Committee for elucidation on the point whether the Public Service Commission was right or not?

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member is already aware that a decision has been taken on the point that it will go to the Privilege Committee.

Extension of service of District Engineer of Rangpur.

***14. Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether any extension of service has been allowed to the present District Engineer of Rangpur?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the term of extension granted to him; and

(*ii*) whether the term of extension is in excess of the period recommended by the District Board?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*)(*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Two years from the 16th September, 1941.

(*ii*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Point of Order.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: On a point of order, Sir. Of course we have got a ruling from you yesterday that Parliamentary Secretaries are entitled to answer questions if they are empowered by the Hon'ble Ministers to answer questions. May I ask through you the Chief Minister whether these Parliamentary Secretaries have any right, power or anything entitling them to go through the files or are they only to go through the answers written here and ask for notice? We find that practically no answer is coming from them. The Hon'ble Ministers are there.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is not a point of order at all.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Sir, the point of order arises in this way. A question is put and we are entitled to have a reply to the question. In order to give a proper reply, they must have recourse to the records of the department and the files. If Parliamentary Secretaries so far are not given access to all the files, it is very difficult for them to give a reply and whatever replies they may give will be hearsay because they are not entitled to look into every file.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Gupta, this is also not a point of order.

Supply of bleaching powder to Midnapore District Board.

***15. Mr. KRISHNA PRASAD MANDAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether after the last cyclone on the 16th October, 1942, the District Board of Midnapore approached the Public Health Department for the supply of bleaching powder for disinfection of the affected area?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether bleaching powder was supplied; if so, when?

(*c*) If not, why not?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Yes, on 31st October, and 27th November, 1942.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Persons killed in air raids.

*18. **Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether all the dead bodies of persons killed due to air raids up to the 31st January, 1943, were identified or not; and

(*ii*) whether the life of any of those killed persons were insured or not?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, the Government contemplate to take so that the heirs of insured persons killed in air raid may get the insured amount?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether all the dead bodies were burnt or buried?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state where these dead bodies were burnt or buried and by whom?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja Shahabuddin): (*a*) (*i*) Ten bodies were not identified.

(*ii*) According to the latest information only one person was insured.

(*b*) Neither the employers nor the relatives of the deceased have yet been able to furnish the name of the Company with which the deceased was insured or any document in connection therewith.

An effort is being made to trace the documents.

(*c*) and (*d*) So far as I am aware most of the dead were either cremated or buried by friends or relatives, and where friends or relatives were not available, by municipalities or charitable institutions in burning ghats or burial grounds. In a few cases only, the police and hospital authorities buried or cremated the corpses. I have no information where each individual body was buried or cremated by the friends and relatives of the deceased persons.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister please consider the desirability of giving notice in newspapers asking whether the deceased persons have got any policy in any Insurance Company?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The matter will be considered.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In the last air-raids we found that many persons were killed. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House how many heads of families were killed in these air-raids and whether Government is ready to compensate those families?

Mr. SPEAKER: Your question is, among the deceased persons how many were heads of families?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Earning members of families.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, what is the question?

Mr. SPEAKER: He wants to know whether it is within your knowledge how many of the killed persons were earning members of their families.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The Claims Officer is receiving the claims and beyond that we have no information.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state how many of these persons were buried or cremated by friends and how many by municipalities and charitable institutions?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I want notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of the answer that the Claims Officer——

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: On a point of order, Sir. My friend is used to make speeches in Bengali. May we hear him speaking in Bengali?

Mr. SPEAKER: That does not matter.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sometimes you cannot understand Bengali and sometimes you cannot understand English and, therefore, I speak in both the languages. (Laughter.)

Sir, my question is that the Claims Officer enquired into the matter, but the Hon'ble Minister could not tell the House how many of the killed persons were earning members of families. May I ask whether he is ready to make an enquiry as to how many of the killed persons were earning members of families?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: This is a request for action, and I submit that when they submit their claims, the Claims Officer will get all the information.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: On a point of order. The question was "How many of the persons killed were earning members of their families?" How does this question constitute a request for action?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question has already been answered.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There was no request to kill more men by the Hon'ble Minister! (Laughter.)

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government is ready to compensate the families whose earning members have been killed by air-raids?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I submit that it does not arise out of this question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, what is your question?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Is Government contemplating the desirability of compensating the families of killed persons who were earning members of their families?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The position is this. There is the War Injuries Ordinance in force and under that certain relief is being provided to those who are injured or killed due to enemy action.

Payment of [illegible] for war injuries in Chittagong and Feni.

***17. Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department be pleased to state the number of applications received up to date from the civil population of Chittagong and Feni for compensation in respect of war injuries due to enemy air raid during 1942-43 for—

(*i*) (1) Loss of life,

(2) Injuries,

(3) Loss of property, and

(4) Damage to property; and

(*ii*) the number that have been disposed of during the period?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the time taken by the Claims Officer in making—

(*i*) enquiries, and

(*ii*) payments,

in each case?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any money was paid by way of relief to the sufferers just after the air raids?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of giving some immediate help pending payment of full claim?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: (*a*) (*i*) (1) and (2) and (*a*) (*ii*) It is not in the public interest to disclose the exact figures relating to loss of life and injuries received during the raids in 1942-43 in Chittagong and Feni.

(*a*) (*i*) (3) and (4) A scheme for insurance of property for damage caused by enemy action was prepared by a Committee appointed by this Government some time ago and it has been recommended to the Government of India to be adopted on an all-India basis. The orders of the Government of India are awaited.

(*b*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Payments were generally made within a month from the filing of the claims application with the Claims Officer unless delayed due to—

(1) absence of the claimant,

(2) non-submission of medical report or

(3) delay in production of certificate from employer as being gainfully occupied.

(*c*) and (*d*) Advance was granted in certain cases in Chittagong. Originally there was no provision under the War Injuries Scheme to grant advances to claimants pending the decision of claims cases. A clause for advance payments by employers and recovery thereof from awards has subsequently been added to the War Injuries Scheme.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give us a rough idea of the scheme for insurance of property for damage caused by enemy action which has been submitted to the Government of India?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I cannot allow that question.

Appointments made in the Jute Regulation and Rural Reconstruction Departments in Dacca Division.

***18. Mr. LAKSHMI NARAYAN BISWAS:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of appointments made up to the 10th of March, 1943, in the different branches of the Department of Jute Regulation and Rural Reconstruction of the Dacca Division; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Muslims,

(2) Caste Hindus, and

(3) Scheduled Castes?

(*b*) Is it a fact—

(*i*) that the appointments of the Scheduled Castes were made much later than the Caste Hindus and the Muslims; and

(*ii*) that some Caste Hindus like Sutradhars have been appointed as Primary Licensing Assistants in the Dacca Division as Scheduled Castes candidates?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of making an inquiry into the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain): (*a*) A statement showing the appointment of the subordinate staff of the Jute Regulation Department which is made on the divisional basis, is laid on the Table. Superior staff are appointed on provincial basis and are excluded from the statement.

The Rural Reconstruction Department has no separate staff of its own but the work of rural reconstruction is done by the Jute Regulation staff.

(*b*)(*i*) No.

(*ii*) and (*c*) It is reported that 2 persons now said to be Sutradhars were appointed. One of them did not join and enquiry is being made by the Chief Controller, Jute Regulation, Bengal, in respect of the other.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 18.

	Muslim.	Caste Hindu.	Scheduled Caste.	Total.
(1) Primary Licensing Assistants ..	497	349	149	995
(2) Clerks and Camp Assistants ..	78	54	23	155
Total ..	575	403	172	1,150

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to answers (*a*) and (*c*) whether the List of Scheduled Castes was consulted by the appointing authorities before making the appointment?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Yes; ordinarily it is consulted.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how in the presence of such a list this mistake was committed by the appointing authorities?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Might have escaped notice. Ordinarily it is consulted. Probably in this case it was not consulted.

Adult education under rural development scheme in Rajshahi.

*19. **Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount provided in the budget for the year 1942-43 for adult education;

(*ii*) the amount allotted for adult education, district by district; and

(*iii*) the amount spent up to date in the Rajshahi district?

(*b*) Have the Government any definite scheme for encouragement and spread of adult education?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of insisting on local authorities—district boards, municipalities and union boards to provide some money for adult education?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (*a*) and (*b*) A provision of Rs.92,000 was made for the purpose in the last year's budget but nothing out of this amount could be utilised as owing to the present emergency the general scheme for the expansion of rural reconstruction activities in the Province including the scheme for encouragement and

spread of adult education has been held in abeyance for the duration of War and the Department has been allowed to carry on only on the existing basis.

(c) Chairmen of District Boards have already been addressed by the Director of Rural Reconstruction, Bengal, in the form of an appeal, a copy of which is laid on the Library Table.

Number of sub-registry offices in Bengal.

*20. **Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR:** (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(i) the number of Sub-Registry offices in Bengal in which annual registration exceeded 6,000 during the last 3 years; and

(ii) whether registration has been annually increasing during the last 3 years?

(b) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing year by year the total number of registration, receipts and expenditure for the last 3 years (1939-40, 1940-41, and 1941-42) under the Bengal Tenancy Act?

(c) Will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state—

(i) the number of Sub-Registry offices—

(1) abolished; and

(2) reopened since 1933 up to 1941?

(ii) the maximum number of registration that a Sub-Registrar could register annually having regard to the different laws in force in connection with registration;

(iii) the maximum number of documents that a Sub-Registrar can ordinarily register in a day; and

(iv) what action Government have taken or proposed to take to give facility to the poor public and womenfolk to get their documents registered on the day of presentation in the offices where registration generally exceeds 6,000 a year?

Khan Sahib MAFIZUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (a) (i) 46 in 1940; 58 in 1941; and 75 in 1942.

(ii) Yes.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table.

(c) (i) (1) 24 and (2) 10 opened (not reopened).

(ii) 6 to 7 thousand, but officers of exceptional merit register more.

(iii) 50, but there are officers who can register double that number.

(iv) Registering officers have instructions to register documents of such parties on the day of presentation. Joint offices are opened where they are justified.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (b) of starred question No. 20.

Year.	*Registration-Receipts		Expenditure.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1939	6,90,252	10,79,083	6,90,215
1940	7,08,500	10,29,401	4,47,555
1941	8,55,758	10,25,332	2,01,842

*According to calender years as returns are not prepared according to financial year.

Detention of Mr. Manilal Dutt as security prisoner after release.

*21. **Mr. HARIPADA CHATTOPADHYAY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that Mr. Manilal Dutt was convicted in a political case and was sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment;

(*ii*) that he served his full term of imprisonment; and

(*iii*) that after the expiry of the term of imprisonment he was not allowed to go out of the jail gate but was detained in the Alipore Central Jail as a security prisoner?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact—

(*i*) that his father died during his detention as a security prisoner;

(*ii*) that he applied for permission to go home under proper guards to perform the *sradh* ceremony of his father; and

(*iii*) that no answer was given to his petition and the reminders thereto?

(*d*) If the answers to (*c*)(*ii*) and (*iii*) are in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of—

(*i*) allowing him to go home during the annual *sradh* ceremony of his father; and

(*ii*) giving reasons for not replying to his petition?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) It was considered expedient to detain him as a security prisoner with a view to prevent him from acting in any manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, the public safety, the maintenance of public order or the efficient prosecution of the war.

(*c*) (*i*) and (*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) and (*d*) (*ii*) Report of the local officers reached Government on expiry of the date of the *sradh* ceremony and so no reply was sent to the prisoner.

(*d*) (*i*) This does not arise, as no petition has yet been received on this point.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly tell us the date when this security prisoner applied for permission and the date when the report reached the Government?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I can give the information later. In the meantime other questions may be put.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that Mr. Manilal Dutt who has served his full term of imprisonment and was due for release on a particular day was not released?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No, Sir; he was released.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how a prisoner who has served his full term of imprisonment is released?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: He was allowed to go out of the jail gates.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this prisoner was allowed to go out of the jail gates at all?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as my information goes, he was allowed to go out of the jail.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: But the answer says "no". I submit, Sir, the question was: "After the expiry of the term of imprisonment he was not allowed to go out of the jail gate" and the answer says: "It was considered expedient to detain him as a security prisoner," the implication being that he was not allowed to go out of the jail.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No, Sir; I am almost certain that he must have been arrested at the gate.

Mr. SPEAKER: How can you say that? There must have been some mistake.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If the honourable member likes, I can ascertain and tell the House what actually took place.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: In view of the answer given by the Hon'ble Home Minister, will he be pleased to consider the desirability of making a general rule that when a person who is due for release is released he must be restored to the original condition from which he was arrested?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No, Sir; I am sorry I cannot accept that.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that it has been held by the Chief Justice of the Federal Court (Sir Maurice Gwyer) that the detention of a security prisoner with a view to prevent him from acting in a manner prejudicial to the defence of British India, public safety, maintenance of public order and efficient prosecution of the war is illegal and *ultra vires*?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think that case is *sub judice*, and that an appeal is pending before the Federal Court.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, no. The honourable member is only asking whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware of the Federal Court decision.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how a prisoner who is serving imprisonment inside the jail long before the outbreak of the war could be thought to be acting in a way prejudicial to the defence of British India, public safety, maintenance of public order and efficient prosecution of the war?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: In view of his past association and the organisation to which he belongs, it is considered unsafe to set him at liberty.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were his associations 10 years before which justified the apprehension that he might be acting in a prejudicial manner?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: These prisoners belong to certain organisations which are pursuing a policy which is detrimental to the safety of the State and therefore no risk can be taken as far as the release of the active members of such associations is concerned.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly tell us whether he was good enough to enquire of the prisoner if he still belonged to the party of which he was a member before his detention and whether he had changed his mind not to join that party after his release?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: We cannot take the risk of releasing a man by simply enquiring whether he has changed his mind or whether he still belongs to the same association, because as I said before, that for the purpose of securing release it is very easy for a prisoner to say that he has changed his mind.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state to what organisation this person belongs?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: He belongs to one of the subversive organisations.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to name the association?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to let us know if all the members of that organisation to which he is suspected to belong have been detained in jail?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: No.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any one of the present Hon'ble Ministers belongs to that organisation?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as my information goes, no.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state before Mr. Monilal Dutta was arrested at the jail gate whether any enquiry was made of him by any Government servant to find out if he still belonged to that organisation and if he still had a mind of taking an active part in that organisation?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already replied to that question.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that one of his colleagues in the present Cabinet was in jail with me for two years, viz., the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, for having committed a political offence?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I do not think that he belongs to any subversive organisation. If the honourable member says that he does, I will take note of that fact.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to let us know whether the policy followed by the Government with regard to this prisoner is in keeping with the declaration made by them that they will take a liberal view with regard to political prisoners?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not allow this question, because this Government never made any such declaration.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRAVARTI: মাননীয় মন্ত্রীমহাশয় অনুগ্রহ কোরে বল্‌বেন কি শ্রীযুক্ত দত্ত কোন তারিখে আবার জেলের ভিতর ধৃত হোয়েছেন?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think before we assumed office.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRAVARTI: মাননীয় মন্ত্রীমহাশয় অনুগ্রহ কোরে বল্‌বেন কি যে সময় মাননীয় Chief Minister ফজলুল্ হক সাহেব ছিলেন, সেই সময়ই শ্রীযুক্ত দত্ত ধৃত হোয়েছিলেন?

Dr. J. M. DAS GUPTA: এবং আপনি তার Supporter ছিলেন।

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That is absolutely correct. Members on the other side of the House are responsible for it.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state now what was the date of his application asking for permission to go home?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think the application was dated the 21st November, 1942.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date on which the report was submitted to the Government?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The first office note is dated 27th November, 1942. His father died on the 16th November. He sent his application on the 21st of November, and I believe it was received in office on the 27th November, 1942. The petition is for permission to go home under proper guards to perform the *Sradh* ceremony of his father.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In that case the date of the *Sradh* cannot have expired.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If the honourable member puts a fresh question I shall answer.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: The Hon'ble Minister was just telling us that he would be able to answer everything.

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot compel a Minister to answer a question.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, I want to know the date of application, the date of report by the local officer and the date when it actually reached the Government.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: I want also to know the date of *Sradh*.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The first office note is dated the 27th November, 1942; therefore it must have been received before that date. It was sent to the Intelligence Branch and there is a seal of the Intelligence Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, dated the 30th November, 1942. Then there is another date of the 19th December, 1942——

Mr. SPEAKER: These are perhaps not what are required.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, instead of asking why this delay is taking place they are asking how long it will take the office to deal with the question, and I am giving out the process by which the delay has been caused. The thing was first received in the office; from office it was sent to the Intelligence Branch: who evidently asked for a local enquiry, and by the time it got back to the office it was the 19th December, 1942, and I find in it the signature of one of the officers. The final order was passed on the 19th December and the *Sradh* took place on the 17th December, but actually the Home Department got the file back on the 19th.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In view of the answer just now given, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how he could avoid frustration of specific rules for leave in Bengal on such occasions?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I realise that there are certain difficulties in the way. On one side something must be done quickly to be effective. That is to say, the *Sradh* ceremony takes place on a certain

date after the death of a person, and if relief is to be given permission should be granted to the prisoner who will perform the *Sradh*. On the other hand, Government have to resort to certain procedure; they have got to find out what are the actual facts, for ultimately on enquiry in many cases it is often found that the conditions which are stated to be serious are not really so. So I am trying to give an explanation to my honourable friend as to why the delay takes place.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the honourable member wants you to consider the desirability of seeing that similar delay may not happen any more.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am prepared to look into this question and see whether we can get the report completed as early as possible so that Government can pass final orders within a month before the annual *Sradh* ceremony takes place.

Political security prisoners appearing at University examinations.

***22. Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of political security prisoners that have applied for leave to appear in University examinations; and

(*ii*) the action that will be taken with regard to such applications?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: 36 prisoners applied for permission to sit for University examinations. Permission was granted in all cases.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Classification of prisoner Babu Subodh Kumar Mitra.

7. Babu KHAGENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that one Babu Subodh Kumar Mitra, B.SC., was convicted by the Subdivisional Officer, Alipur Duar, Jalpaiguri district, on the 5th December, 1942, under section 39 of the Defence of India Rules;

(*ii*) that he has now been serving his sentences in the Jalpaiguri District Jail as Division III prisoner;

(*iii*) that the trying Magistrate placed him as a Division III prisoner;

(*iv*) that the prisoner is a Science graduate of the Calcutta University;

(*v*) that he belongs to a respectable upper middle class family of the Alipur Duar town; and

(*vi*) that at the time of his arrest he had been living with his father?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the considerability of reviewing his case for classification as Division II prisoner?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) (*i*) to (*iv*) Yes.

(*v*) His father is now working as a secretary of a local tea company. The status of the person, as ascertained on local enquiry, did not show that the family was an "upper middle class one".

(*vi*) He was arrested at Madanhat and had been away from home.

(*b*) The matter is receiving attention of Government.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: From the answers given, do I understand the Hon'ble Home Minister to say that in the matter of classification of a prisoner his educational qualification is not taken into consideration?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: May I refer the honourable member to my answer (*b*)?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is necessary that a prisoner must belong to the "upper middle class" in order to be placed in a higher division?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: In my opinion, no.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether "upper middle class" has been defined in the Jail Code or anywhere else?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have already stated that I was not satisfied with the classification of these prisoners, and for this reason I sent them certain questions so that I might be able to reply to the questions that might be put to me in this connection or deal with the matter satisfactorily. In the meantime I thought that by the time the answers are released I would get replies to my questions and would be able to give necessary answers. But I find today that I have not as yet received any reply from the District Magistrate Therefore the position is that the matter is still under enquiry. But I may tell my honourable friend that I am myself not satisfied with this classification of the prisoner.

Public Prosecutor of Rajshahi.

8. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the present public prosecutor of Rajshahi has tendered his resignation?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when the resignation was tendered;

(*ii*) whether Government have accepted his resignation;

(*iii*) the present age of the public prosecutor; and

(*iv*) the rules, if any, regarding the retirement of the public prosecutor?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any recommendations by the local authorities have been received by the Government for the appointment of a new public prosecutor?

(*d*) If so, when?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are considering the desirability of appointing a new public prosecutor immediately?

MINISTER in charge of the JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain, Khan Bahadur): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) 27th April, 1937.

(*ii*) No.

(*iii*) 68 years 11 months.

(*iv*) Rule 15D, page 33 of the Legal Remembrancer's Manual.

(*c*) Certain suggestions have been received from the District Magistrate which are under consideration.

(*d*) 19th April, 1943.

(*e*) Yes.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the age-limit up to which a Public Prosecutor is allowed to work?

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Up to the 60th year.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: In reply to question (*iii*) the Hon'ble Minister has said that the Public Prosecutor of Rajshahi is 68 years and 11 months old. Now, will he be pleased to tell us how the Public Prosecutor of Rajshahi has been allowed to work for these nine long years after he reached his sixtieth year?

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: It has a long history. This gentleman is supposed to have tendered his resignation on the 27th April, 1937, but on that date immediately after his resignation he approached the then Minister in charge and said that he wanted to withdraw his resignation and he further said that his age was really not 60 years at that time but it was just 56 years. He also showed me a horoscope. That being the position I gave him the benefit of doubt, and he was allowed to continue. Then after he actually reached 60 years he was reappointed, because I thought that he could continue to work efficiently for one year more. We have now got the report of the District Magistrate suggesting the separation of the functions of the Public Prosecutor and the Government Pleader. The Government Pleader has been appointed and the question of the appointment of Public Prosecutor has come up, and it has been decided by the Government that a new Public Prosecutor must be appointed.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Sir, is that a speech?

(At this stage there were requests from the Opposition Benches to the Hon'ble Minister to go to the microphone.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I see that the Nawab Saheb's answer has caught the imagination of everybody. (Laughter.)

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: We wanted the names of three Muslim candidates from the District Magistrate for the post of Public Prosecutor. The post of Government Pleader was given to a Hindu and he was appointed. Then there was some discussion amongst us, but we could not actually fix——

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: On a point of privilege. Yesterday the microphone failed and today it is not working. We cannot understand what the office is doing.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry this is not my department strictly speaking. This morning some officer saw me and he said that the microphone is in order. I do not know whether it is in order still, but let us try and see if it is in order.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: When the Nawab Saheb speaks we must have the microphone; otherwise we cannot hear him.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: The District Magistrate sent his report, and we could not immediately appoint a man from his recommendations. I then left office. My friend Mr. Banerjee took it up. He worked for 16 months and he did not do his work.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: On a point of personal explanation. The Hon'ble Judicial Minister is making me accountable for neglect of duty. Sir, does that arise out of the question?

Mr. SPEAKER: I could not hear the question, nor have I had the privilege of hearing the answer. That is the whole trouble.

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Usually I have very long ears, but I could not follow the Nawab Saheb excepting what fell from his lips just now.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Now the moment I assumed charge I have asked the District Magistrate to send me his nomination. That has not yet come and as soon as it comes the appointment will be made.

Staff of Pabna Collectorate.

9. Mr. JACAT CHANDRA MANDAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing in respect of the Pabna Collectorate—

(i) the present number of clerks in—

(1) Upper division,

(2) Lower division, and

(3) Temporary hands;

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Hindus,
(2) Muslims, and
(3) Scheduled Castes;

(*iii*) the number of clerks that were appointed—

(1) before, and
(2) after,

the enforcement of Communal Ratio Rules, 1940;

(*iv*) the number of them that are—

(1) Hindus,
(2) Muslims, and
(3) Scheduled Castes?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*i*) (1) 12.

(2) 87.
(3) 59.

	Muslim.	Caste Hindu.	Scheduled Caste.
(*ii*) Upper Division ..	5	7	Nil
Lower Division ..	42	38	7
Temporary ..	25	28	6

	Before the enforcement of the Communal Ratio.	After the enforcement of the Communal Ratio.
(*iii*) Upper Division ..	10	2
Lower Division ..	70	17
Temporary ..	12	47

	Muslim.		Caste Hindu.		Scheduled Caste.	
	Before.	After.	Before.	After.	Before.	After.
(*iv*) Upper Division ..	4	1	6	1	..	..
Lower Division ..	33	9	33	5	4	3
Temporary ..	1	24	11	17	..	6

Communal disturbance at Dacca.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, rumours are afloat in the country relating to the affairs at Dacca. It is reported that a communal disturbance——

Mr. SPEAKER: You cannot deliver a speech.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: I want an information.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot allow you to get any information at this stage. We are in the midst of a very important business.

Questions over. Demands for grants.

Point of Order.

(On the question of admissibility of "Demands for Grants".)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I rise on a point of order? You have now called for demands for grants. My point of order is that each of the demands and the form in which it is being asked for are not in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act and of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules. Sir, the House will recall that the financial estimate for 1943-44 was presented before the Bengal Legislative Assembly in February last in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act commencing from section 78. Later on in March certain dates were allotted for the consideration of the voting on grants and as a matter of fact the voting continued till the 27th of March, 1943. On the 29th of March, 1943, when the House met to continue the voting on the remaining grants, the House will recall, it was reported that the then Chief Minister had been made to tender his resignation. Then the House was adjourned. The voting on grants was not completed. On the 31st March, 1943, a proclamation was issued by His Excellency the Governor under section 93. I am not here, Sir, entering into the circumstances under which His Excellency acted—I am proceeding on the assumption that the orders of His Excellency the Governor were in accordance with law. A notification was issued on the 31st of March containing the proclamation. The proclamation stated, (A) That His Excellency the Governor had declared that all his functions under the Act shall be exercised by him in his discretion. (B) That he assumed to himself all powers vested by or under the Act in the provincial legislature and all powers vested in either chamber of that legislature but not so as to affect any power exercisable by His Majesty with respect to bills reserved for his consideration or the disallowance of acts. He also made certain incidental and consequential provisions which appeared to him to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the proclamation. I do not intend to read all the clauses, but clause 3 is relevant. Clause 3 stated, "Any expenditure from the revenues of the province, whether expenditure charged by the Act on these revenues or not, shall be deemed to have been duly authorised if it is included in an annual estimate of expenditure or a supplementary estimate of expenditure published in the official gazette of the province." On the same day, Sir, another notification was issued—notification No. 5470F.B., which was to the following effect:—

> In pursuance of paragraph 3 of the proclamation (which I have just now read out) issued on the 31st March, 1943, by His Excellency the Governor under section 93 of the Government of India Act the annual estimate of expenditure for the year 1943-44 authorised by His Excellency the Governor is published for general information.

This was issued by order of His Excellency the Governor and signed by the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Finance Department. Along with this there was the annual estimate of expenditure of the province for 1943-44.

The point here which I desire to stress is that this annual estimate included all the grants including the grants which the Legislature had during the previous 8 or 10 days voted upon.

His Excellency the Governor under this power passed the entire annual estimate of expenditure for 1943-44. I shall revert to this point a little later.

Let me proceed with the narration of events. This was on the 31st March. On the 1st April, 1943, the province started under section 93. On the 24th of April, 1943, a notification was issued, No. 508, dated the 24th April, 1943. Another proclamation was issued by His Excellency the Governor which was issued for public information and by which he revoked the proclamation issued under section 93 on the 31st March, 1943. On the same day there was a further notification appointing a Council of Ministers. On the same day there was a third notification which prorogued the Bengal Legislative Assembly and which was notification No. 607A.R., issued after the formation of the Council of Ministers and was signed by His Excellency the Governor who directed that the Bengal Legislative Assembly do stand prorogued from the afternoon of the 24th April, 1943.

Then comes the present session of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. The present session has been convened and a memorandum has been circulated signed by the Secretary to the Finance Department explaining how the Government is advised that it should proceed with regard to the Budget for 1943-44. The first paragraph of that memorandum states "Government are advised that on the revocation of the proclamation under section 93 of the Government of India Act, the grants authorised by the Governor cease to have force and the revived operation of sections 78, 79 and 80 requires that all expenditure incurred after the revocation of the proclamation shall be covered by a schedule duly authenticated under section 80". Here, Sir, if I may remind the House about the provisions in the Government of India Act, there are really three parts in respect of the passing of the budget by the Provincial Legislative Assembly. In the first place, under section 78 there must be an annual financial estimate which is called "the annual financial estimate". Now this the Governor places before the Legislative Assembly. Here the Governor acts not in his discretion, not in his individual judgment, but he acts on the advice of his Ministers, and this is so because the provisions of sections 50 and 51 of the Government of India Act which clearly lay down that only in respect of those matters where it is stated specifically in the Act that the Governor acts in his discretion or in his individual judgment that the Governor shall do so. In other words, in respect of other matters where only the name of the Governor appears as such, the Governor acts constitutionally on the advice of the Council of Ministers. Here the Governor acting through his Ministers places the financial statement annually before the Assembly. This is stage No. 1.

Then the financial estimate is divided into two portions. So far as the first portion is concerned, one portion is charged and the other portion is liable to be voted upon by the Legislature. The portion that is charged is enumerated under section 78(3). There the list is exhaustive except that in

the last clause (*g*) it is stated that any other expenditure declared by this Act or any Act of the Provincial Legislature to be so charged will also be charged expenditure. Other items are specifically mentioned under section 78(3). Then the vote of the grants takes place.

There can be a discussion of the charged items and with regard to the voting of the grants I would draw your attention to the powers which are vested in the Legislature when the demands are placed for voting. The powers are three-fold. First, the Assembly can assent to the entire demand. Secondly, the Assembly can reject the entire demand; and thirdly, the Assembly can reduce the amount actually specified in such a manner as the Assembly may deem fit. The Assembly has not the power to increase the grants. These are the three specific powers which the Assembly enjoys. That is stage No. 2.

Then comes the last stage when after the Assembly has done its work the Governor has to authenticate the schedule of total expenditure. Section 80(3) states that subject to the provisions of the next succeeding section no expenditure from the revenues of the province shall be deemed to be duly authorised unless it is specified in the schedule so authenticated. There must be an authenticated schedule in order to recognise the expenditure as authorised expenditure of the province. Section 81 relates to supplementary statements of expenditure. It is not the Government case nor anybody's case that the budget which we are being asked to consider today comes within the purview of section 81. So I do not wish to discuss the terms of section 81.

Now, Sir, from one point of view I welcome the decision of the Governor that he has placed the Budget before the Legislature again. It may have been argued or it may be argued even now that the Governor has passed the entire expenditure for the entire year and it is not necessary that the expenditure of the financial year 1943-44 should at all come back to the Bengal Legislative Assembly. Now that is according to my submission against the provisions of the Government of India Act, and that is against the basic canons of constitutional government. Already the Secretary of State has ruled, and that will appear from the proceedings of the Orissa Assembly and the Assam Legislative Assembly, that as soon as section 93 ceases to operate, the financial estimate of the year has to come back to the Assembly of the province concerned. That is also the stand taken up by the present Governor and I have no quarrel with him. But my point of order is, Sir, that what the Provincial Government has done in the present instance is not enough. The rights of the Legislature are wider than what the Governor acting through his Council of Ministers is prepared to concede in the present instance. My submission is that the Act contemplates one and only one Financial Estimate in the year and that the part voting of grants that took place in March completely lapsed as soon as the constitution was suspended and section 93 was brought into operation. That the voting on grants was regarded as nugatory is patent from the fact that the

Governor himself on the 31st March, 1943, passed by a special notification the budget for the entire year in respect of all the grants including the grants which the Assembly had voted for during the previous fortnight. In other words, when 1st April, 1943, opened in this province it opened with a Governor's budget. The Legislature was then suspended. Whatever the Legislature had done in respect of the Budget had all merged in the budget of the Governor. It was the Governor's budget with which the province started and whatever expenditure was incurred during the period from 1st April to 24th April was lawful expenditure incurred in accordance with the provisions of the Governor's budget. There was no question of reviving now a portion of the budget which was not passed by the Bengal Legislative Assembly in the latter portion of March. In fact, Sir, the mere voting of some grants does not make an expenditure lawful expenditure. As I just now submitted, that is only a part of the 3 essential parts which have to be fulfilled before expenditure can be deemed to be lawful, and all that the Assembly did was that it considered the financial estimate, it considered the budget grants under some heads and then suddenly the Assembly was stopped. Suddenly the constitution was suspended and the Governor took upon himself the entire power of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and exercising his incidental powers he passed the Governor's budget for the entire year. Now what happened on the 24th April, 1943? I am not here raising those other controversial issues as to the propriety of the Governor in acting in a manner in which he has acted because I do not want to cloud the issues, but at a later stage if necessary I shall have to refer to this very important constitutional aspect of the present position as well. But let us take it that on the 24th April the Governor rightly felt that the constituion should again be brought into being. He brings the constitution into being. As soon as he does so, his powers of granting financial expenditure come to an end. The Legislature is revived and it takes full control of the rest of the financial year. Now here a point arises: "Should the budget be presented as from the 24th April to 31st of March, 1944, or again as from the 1st April, 1943, to 31st March, 1944"? In other words has the Bengal Legislative Assembly the jurisdiction to question the expenditure which has already been lawfully incurred under the Governor's budget passed on 31st March, 1943? Now, Sir, fortunately for the province we are not now under the autocratic rule of section 93. Whatever powers there are in the Government of India Act, those powers are in operation today. They may be precious little. But whatever powers there are, they are in actual operation today and we are sitting here as the Legislative Assembly dealing with the financial estimate for 1943-44. My submission is that we cannot go beyond the provisions of the Act and rules framed by the Bengal Legislative Assembly. I am asking you, Sir, and I am asking through you the Hon'ble Chief Minister, to explain under what authority the Governor can claim immunity with regard to the expenditure incurred between the 1st April and 24th April, 1943. I cannot give you a precedent but I can give you an analogy. When the Government of India Act, 1935, was passed, it was not known when Provincial Autonomy would be brought into existence. There was a special Order in Council passed by His Majesty which is called

the Government of India Act Transitory Provision Order, 1936. Under that Order it was specifically laid down that the Governor of a province could pass lawful expenditure for the province concerned before Provincial Autonomy was brought into existence, but he could not go beyond the period of 6 months. That is, Sir, clause 5 of this particular Order. Even that order lays down that as soon as the Provincial Assembly is constituted and takes over the affairs of the province, the financial estimates of that particular year will be placed before the Assembly and such financial estimates should include the expenditure which has been authorised by the Governor under this particular clause of the special order. I shall place, Sir, this clause before you in a minute. "The Governor of each Province may in his discretion from time to time authorise such expenditure from the revenues of the province as he deems necessary to enable the business of the Provincial Government to be carried on between the commencement of Part III of the new Act (that is the Provincial Autonomy portion), and the date on which the schedule of authorised expenditure is authenticated in accordance with the provision of section 80 of the new Act, or until the expiration of six months from the commencement of Part III of the new Act whichever first occurs, provided that except with the consent of the Governor-General in his discretion the expenditure so authorised shall not exceed one-half of the total expenditure from the revenues of the province in the previous financial year as shown in the revised estimate of that year." If I may pause here for a second, I respectfully draw your attention to this provision and say that Parliament was not prepared to give unrestricted powers, autocratic powers, to any Governor to provide for expenditure in any manner that he chooses, and here it laid down that the expenditure without the consent of the Governor-General must not exceed half of the total expenditure from the revenues of the province in a normal year. This second clause says that expenditure authorised under the preceding sub-paragraph shall be included under proper heads in the first estimate of expenditure laid before the Provincial Legislature under section 78 of the new Act and the provisions of that section and of sections 79 and 80 of that Act shall apply in relation thereto, provided that any expenditure so authorised shall, so far as regards money paid and liabilities incurred before the date on which a schedule of authorised expenditure is authenticated in accordance with the provisions of section 80, be deemed for all purposes of the new Act to have been duly authorised, notwithstanding that it may not be included in the schedule so auhenticated. Now, Sir, what is the significance of this clause? It means that even where the Governor may have extraordinary powers to pass the budget without taking recourse to sections 79 and 80, he may do so for not more than 6 months and whatever he spends will have to come back to the Legislature, but the Legislature will be precluded from voting on these grants, or even if the Legislature votes and rejects these will be regarded as expenditure as if they were included within the authenticated schedule. But there was no attempt even in those cases to prevent the Legislature from criticising the expenditure or discussing any of the items which might have been included in the Governor's special budget for 6 months. As I said, Sir, it is not a precedent, but it certainly indicates that

this prerogative, this special privilege which has been given to the Provincial Assembly under the Government of India Act to sanction supplies to a province is one which cannot be lightly tampered with even by the Governor of a province.

Now let me come back to the position as it stands now. What is the position today? The Government proposes that the grants which were voted upon by the Legislature in March will be allowed to remain intact. Just consider the absurdity of that position. Already under the Governor's budget a portion of that expenditure has been disposed of. What will be the authenticated schedule which the Governor will pass if the present programme is to be accepted by us? That will be a schedule which will include the entire grants which had been passed by the Legislature in March, although a portion of it has already been disposed of by the Governor acting under section 93 in accordance with the Governor's budget and added to that will be the period between the 24th April, 1943, and 31st March, 1944, in respect of those grants which the Assembly did not vote upon in March last. There is no provision for this sort of procedure in the Government of India Act or in the rules framed under the Bengal Legislative Assembly. My submission therefore would be that the entire budget for 1943-44 has to come back to the Bengal Legislative Assembly as soon as section 93 is revoked. Now the question, Sir, you may ask is about the actual period during which the Governor administered under section 93. It is not for the Opposition to suggest how a particular situation would be met but there may be ways of doing it also. I am not proceeding to suggest that, except that I wish to say that you cannot regard it as charged expenditure. There is only one class of expenditure under the Government of India Act in respect of which we are precluded from voting and that is charged expenditure, and charged expenditure is clearly and categorically enumerated in section 78(3) of the Government of India Act. It may be that the Government, if so advised under setcion 82, may bring in a Finance Bill which may declare the portion of the expenditure incurred under the Governor's budget as charged expenditure. I am not suggesting what Government should or should not do, but I am pointing out that the object of the point of order is that the manner in which the budget is proposed to be placed constitutes a serious curtailment of the rights and privileges of the House and is utterly inconsistent with the provisions of the Government of India Act and of the Legislative Assembly Rules.

Now, Sir, let us take the last portion. What is it that the Government proposes to do? Government proposes to ask for a grant which is not specified. That also, I submit, is utterly inconsistent with the provisions of the law. If you will look to the Government of India Act which I will just now read out, you will find that it is clearly stated that when the House will exercise its right of reducing a demand, it will do so in respect of any specified sum for which the grant is being asked for. We are being asked to vote for Y which is equal to Z – X. Z we know; X we do not know and Y also we do not know, but we have been asked to vote for Y which we have the power to reduce as well. This is inconsistent with the Act and is clearly inconsistent with the rules of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. If

you look at section 79(2), you will find that "so much of the said estimates as relates to other expenditure—that amounts to voted expenditure—shall be submitted in the form of demands for grants to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Assembly shall have the power to assent or refuse to assent to any demand or to assent to a demand subject to a reduction of the amounts specified therein". Therefore, there must be a specified sum stated for which the demand is being asked for. We cannot vote for the entire demand because the position taken up by Government is that the expenditure incurred between 1st April and 24th April is outside the purview of the Legislature. This rule is made more clear by the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules, rule 106, namely, that "each demand shall contain, first, a statement of the total grant proposed," which is absent with regard to the demand which the Government today proposes to place before the Legislature, "and then a statement of the detailed estimates under each grant, divided into items" which also obviously cannot be supplied. Sir, therefore for all these three reasons which I have submitted before you the budget demand which is proposed to be placed before the House this afternoon cannot be proceeded with.

It may be argued, Sir, if I may so anticipate, that it was done in Orissa and Assam. My submission would be that Orissa and Assam do not apply to the peculiar circumstances with which we are concerned in Bengal.. In fact, what was done in Orissa and Assam indirectly strengthens our case and that was that the entire budget after revocation of section 93 had to be placed before the Provincial Assembly. In one case the point of order was not raised and in another case the point of order was raised and the Speaker ruled otherwise. There the Speaker held that it was not necessary to bring before the Legislature the expenditure which has been incurred in the Governor's budget under section 93, but he was not prepared to give a ruling. In fact, there was no occasion for the budget to be split into parts and some portion of it dealt with in a previous session of the Legislature which had been subsequently suspended, merging all expenditure in a Governor's budget. I know that the matter is not without difficulty, but I do make my submission with regard to the legal and constitutional position as we see it. As I started by saying I shall not utilise this occasion for criticising the manner in which section 93 has been brought into operation, but there is one aspect of the matter which the House cannot ignore. In the communique that was issued by the Governor necessitating the operation of section 93, he said that this was necessary to grant supplies to the province. And now on his own showing on the 24th of April, it is found that after the Ministry of his own choice has been placed in power, he realised that the constitutional and legal position required that the budget will have to be brought back to the Legislature again. Who are his adivsers? Are they paid by the Bengal Government or paid from their own pockets or from the pockets of the Governor of the province?

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Mookerjee, may I interrupt you for a minute? You are discussing a constitutional question of great importance. I would request you while discussing this question to discuss the whole affair

dispassionately from the point of view of the constitution and the law and I would request you not to bring in a matter of passion, and I think that will be better.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I shall be as dispassionate as possible. I am not bringing in an unconstitutional question. You have said a number of times and we know also that the Speaker is the custodian of the rights and privileges of the members of the House. The point, in my opinion, is one which affects the privilege of the House, and if you rule, we shall not discuss the point. I shall bow down to your decision. The reason why I brought this last point is this: the Legislature has the prerogative to pass the financial estimate for the entire year. Now the Legislature was suspended by the Governor acting in his own discretion under section 93 before the budget could be completed. My point is that when on the 24th of April the Legislature was revived again, why, Sir, should this order or proclamation proroguing the Legislature have been made? Why was not the Legislature called on the 25th or 26th April? Now that the Constitution was again functioning, let the Legislature meet and consider the matter *de novo*. I am not going to impute any motive as to whether it was necessary to give sufficient time and opportunity to the new favoured Ministry to gain more votes. But I am simply speaking with reference to the rules of the House. Section 93 was brought into creation for the purpose of giving supplies to the province and on the 24th April when the constitution was brought back into creation, immediately the Legislature was prorogued and after three months we are meeting here today not to say anything in respect of the period from the 1st April to the 24th April and to make legal, illegal and unauthorised expenditure between 24th April and July, 1943. This, I submit, Sir, is certainly a serious and unparalleled encroachment on the liberty and privilege of the House as a Legislature. Of course, it has nothing to do with the other constitutional and legal points which I have raised as regards the presentation and passing of the budget demands in respect of the year 1943-44.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want to be clear in my mind, Dr. Mookerjee. Let us understand clearly what exactly your point of order is. I understand the negative part of it. It means that the demand as brought before this House is not in order.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: That I have said.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a negative aspect and do I understand that your positive aspect of this thing is that the entire budget should be brought before the House or the entire budget for the year *minus* the expenditure incurred between the 1st April and the 24th April should be brought before the House? What is your exact constructive suggestion?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: I am glad that you have put it in that direct form. My submission to you, in the first place, is that the entire budget strictly in accordance with the provisions of law has to be brought before the Bengal Legislative Assembly including the portion

between the 1st April and the 24th April, 1943, and the reasons which I have given I do not wish to re-enumerate. On the other hand, you may hold that the expenditure actually incurred during the period when the Governor's budget was in operation is authorised expenditure and need not come back to the Legislative Assembly at all which, as I pointed out, is not even in accordance with the spirit of the special powers which were specifically given to the Governor before the Provincial Autonomy portion came into being. In any case the entire budget has to come in a revised form from the 24th April, 1943, to 31st March, 1944. There is no escape from that position. But my submission would be that even the portion which was included in the Governor's budget has to come back unless some steps are taken by Government to make it charged expenditure and debar it from the vote of the Legislature. Then also it must come and it will then come for mere discussion, but it cannot effect the expenditure which has already been incurred. But there must be some lawful sanction for the expenditure which is now going to be incurred in the province.

Mr. SPEAKER: May I then take it that your viewpoint is that all that happened in March have lapsed altogether and the budget has got to be presented afresh and all the formalities gone into afresh and then voting should also be gone into? If I decide that it should be with regard to that part only which is not covered by the period from the 1st April to the 24th April, then with regard to that portion and if I decide that the entire thing should come, then with regard to the entire budget. Do I take it in that way?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: So far as the demands which were voted upon by the Assembly in March session are concerned, my humble submission is that they are dead and gone and the province started with the Governor's budget as passed under the proclamation. Now, so far as your second question is concerned, namely, the procedure to be adopted, that, Sir, is a point of detail. But if you look to the Assam and Orissa precendents, you will find that there also the entire revised estimate was placed before the Legislature The Finance Minister got up and made a statement. He explained the circumstances under which in the midst of the year the financial statement had to be brought before the Assembly and there was voting of grants in accordance with the Assembly Rules. Here as to whether there should be entire voting or there should be curtailment of days, these are questions of detail which after the main point has been decided by you, you may discuss with the Leader of the House and the leaders of different parties and it may be possible to come to some sort of agreement. But the fundamental point is that the budget, as presented now in part, is entirely out of order and cannot be proceeded with. There can be only one financial estimate under section 78. This is conceded to by Government. The portion of the Budget we are asked to vote upon is different from the estimate placed before the House in February, inasmuch as the period has been reduced from one year to eleven months and one week. This cannot be done without bringing forward a revised Financial Estimate, abrogating the one introduced in February.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: On a point of order, Sir. My point is that so far as the demand that is coming before us is concerned, it must be specific because members of this House have every power to move a motion for reduction of the demand. Unless the amount of demand is specified, no such motion can be in order. So, Sir, apart from other questions, from this point of view also we can rightfully demand that the demand which will be put forward before us must be a specific amount. Therefore, Government must specify the amount of expenditure that has been made from the 1st April to the 24th April and we may reduce the demand that may be put forward before us.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: May I first of all know, Sir, if I shall have the right to speak again?

Mr. SPEAKER: As many times as you like, because this is not strictly a formal debate. This is a matter involving great constitutional questions. That is why I want to have your assistance. So I am not going to disallow anybody to speak. If I can get a little bit of assistance, it will always be very much welcome.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Mr. Speaker, I shall try briefly to present our point of view in this matter. It is admitted on all hands that this is an unprecedented situation. It is also admitted that the privileges of this House have to be respected. There is one point of view—and a point of view which has some force behind it—that after the authentication by His Excellency the Governor the budget is complete. There is another point of view, and that is our point of view, that for the sake of propriety at any rate we should approach the Assembly for its assent with regard to demands on which the Assembly has not yet expressed its assent. It is a right of this House to vote supplies; it is its inherent right. We take up this attitude, that for a period of 24 days there was no constitutional government in the usual sense, that is to say, there was no parliamentary government. Therefore the expenditure incurred during that period was incurred on the authority of His Excellency the Governor. For the rest of the financial year, we have to come before this House for supplies and I take it that having the assent of the House with regard to 18 demands we ought to get your assent with regard to the remaining demands. There is no question of lapse here. We begin where we left; that is our position. That is to say, it is like Rip Van Winkle having gone to sleep and waking up after 24 days and taking up the threads of life from the time when he went to sleep. We have got to pick up the thread; that is the correct point of view. We might bring in legal arguments and quibbles, but really the votes of this House on the demands last session have not lapsed. We are beginning again; we are continuing our work—the work that had been cut short in certain extraordinary circumstances. Therefore I submit to you, Sir, that we are perfectly in order in

asking for the vote of the House on the remaining grants. (Dr. J. M. DAS GUPTA: Very late!) We have had to take some time to summon the Legislative Assembly, but you cannot say that we have not taken a very early opportunity in getting the Legislature summoned. My point of view, therefore, is quite simple, namely, that we should begin from where we had left.

As regards the supposed analogy of Orissa and Assam, it must be remembered that there was no budget in those provinces when section 93 was revoked. Therefore, a whole budget had to be presented before the Legislature, and the situation therefore was quite different. Here the whole budget was presented for the year 1943-44. That budget was partly discussed, but the discussion was not completed. Now we want you to complete the discussion. Therefore I feel that we are justified in taking up the stand we have taken and in asking you, Sir, to allow the Ministers to move the demands which have not so far been moved.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: May I put one question to the Hon'ble Minister through you, Sir? The amount is not specified. May I know what is the amount?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: The amount has not been specified for the simple reason that we cannot yet know what amount actually and exactly was spent. (Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: That is our difficulty.) (Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: That is our complaint.) As a matter of fact, you will find from the Government of India Act that what the Assembly votes is the maximum amount, i.e., a sum not exceeding that amount, that may be spent——

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: We are not in the British Parliament.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Not in the Government of India Act. Find out some other Act.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: The point really is that what we are asking for is the amount which we cannot exceed.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Nobody quarrels with that position.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: If we are to exceed the amounts voted, we will have to come to the House for supplementary demands, but every year we have surpluses left over. Therefore, the amount of the demand specified is the maximum amount that the Legislature allows the Government to spend under a particular head. That maximum amount is arrived at after certain calculations but there always remain an unspent balance so that in case we have to exceed that amount, we have to come again to the Legislature. If you are anxious to know the probable amount of expenditure for the period from 1st April to 24th April, it would be something like 1/15th of the whole year's demand, i.e., 7 per cent. That gives an approximate idea. As long as we do not exceed the total amount I think it would be quite all right; that is to say, we should not be allowed

to spend anything beyond the amounts we are asking for taking into account what has been spent by His Excellency.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: I fully sympathise with the difficulties of the Hon'ble Finance Minister. His difficulties are many and immense and he has narrated these difficulties before the House. He cannot find out how much has been spent during that fateful period from 1st April to 24th April. He cannot find out the section which authorises him to bring forward a demand not exceeding a certain amount. He cannot find out the relevant section of the Government of India Act which legalises the demand which he has made and he says in the circumstances that is the best they can do and therefore asks the Legislature almost as a matter of grace to allow them to tide over this difficulty. Now, Sir, I was really waiting for some light to be thrown by the Hon'ble Finance Minister upon the legal position and he has frankly stated that he has failed to point out the section which would allow them or authorise them to bring forward the demand in the form that they have brought without specifying the amount at all but only stating that we shall not exceed so much amount under this particular head. I do not desire to take up the time of the House by discussing the matter at any great length particularly in view of the inability pleaded by the Hon'ble Finance Minister to point out the relevant section which justifies the claims that they are making.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: There cannot be any relevant section but a position like this was never contemplated.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Therefore, if I may humbly advise the Hon'ble Finance Minister that it would be better to ask the Government of India to get His Majesty's Government to amend the Government of India Act for the purpose of tiding over the difficult situation that has been created. My honourable friend says that there are no relevant sections available because the relevant situation never arose before, but that would not satisfy the Legislature and the requirements of the law. In these circumstances, I would ask him to withdraw the demand in the form in which it has been presented, to think over the matter and try to bring it within the four corners of the law, this *vade-mecum*, the Government of India Act, which guides him and everybody else, and thus satisfy the law as it stands today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Basu, I think we are often beside the point. We are not here discussing the conduct of Ministers or of the Government. I quite understand that while discussing a point of order sometimes it becomes necessary to discuss the conduct of persons who have proceeded in a particular way but the main point here for our consideration is a great constitutional point. If the Hon'ble Finance Minister cannot render much assistance, that is no reason why we should shirk our responsibility.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Not at all, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the law does not make any specific provision, so long as the law is not amended we cannot suspend our work. Administration must go on. Therefore we have got to proceed in a certain manner.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Section 93 is there.

Mr. SPEAKER: We have to admit that section 93 is not applicable in case like this.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It was not applicable on the 31st of March either.

Mr. SPEAKER: I want your assistance to solve this difficult problem and the points as I have been able to understand are these. First of all, in the circumstances that have arisen, what is the budget that should really come before the House? Is it to be the entire thing afresh, that is, is it to be that part which has been voted upon including that portion which has already been expended under the authorisation of the Governor, or is it to be *minus* that sum; in other words, is it to be the entire thing including the 24 days or is it to be the entire thing excluding the 24 days, or is it to be only that part which was not voted upon including the 24 days or excluding the 24 days? These are the possible alternatives with regard to the *quantum*, if I may use that expression, of the budget that has been presented before the House. That is the substantive part.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: There is one other point whether the Government does not find itself in such a morass that there is no way out of the difficulty.

Mr. SPEAKER: These are my difficulties. For my guidance I am asking your advice. This is the substantive part. Then comes the question of procedure. What is the procedure to be followed with regard to whatever part we think should come before the House and in what manner. These are questions which require consideration in a case like this.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DUTTA: We all know that the amount must be definite and specific.

Mr. SPEAKER: In other words it appears to me that the question to be solved requires a decision on these three points, namely, what is the effect on the budget presented by the last Ministry of the prorogation, of the proclamation and the subsequent steps taken by the Governor consequent on the proclamation and revocation of the proclamation and on the change of Government. These are the points that appear to me to require consideration and decision. Now I shall be glad if any of you can give me any assistance in these matters.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, if you will kindly refer to section 78(*1*) of the Government of India Act, you will find that the Governor shall in respect of every financial year cause to be laid before the Chamber or Chambers of the Legislature a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the province for that year, in this part of this Act referred to as the "annual financial statement". Sir, that was done in February last: the financial statement was caused to be laid by the Governor before the Assembly in February last. Then, Sir, if you refer to rule 14 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly (Governor's) Rules, you will find therein

that "on a day or days to be appointed by the Governor exercising his individual judgment subsequent to the day on which the budget is presented and for such time as the Governor exercising his individual judgment may allot for this purpose, the Assembly shall be at liberty to discuss the budget as a whole or any question of principle involved therein, but no motion shall be moved nor shall the budget be submitted to the vote of the Assembly at this stage." That stage was also gone through. Therefore section 78 is the substantive section and rule 14 of the Governor's Rules lays down the procedure for the general discussion of the budget. So far as that stage is concerned that was completely gone through. Therefore, the entire budget in the sense that it is a financial statement need not be placed before the Assembly because that has already been done. All the provisions of section 78 of the Government of India Act and rule 14 of the Governor's Rules have been complied with. The next stage then comes and that is with regard to section 79 of the Government of India Act. There they have divided between the charged and other expenditure first and then say, "So much of the said estimates as relates to other expenditure shall be submitted, in the form of demands for grants, to the Legislative Assembly, and the Legislative Assembly shall have power to assent, or to refuse to assent, to any demand or to assent to a demand subject to a reduction of the amount specified therein". There we find that the amount to be specified is the amount to be reduced. It has not been said that the demand for grant should specify any amount. It is simply misleading and the Opposition is trying to mislead the Assembly by what they have so far said.

Then, Sir, the Rules of Business of the Assembly lay down the procedure. I am referring to rule 107 which says, "No motion for appropriation can be made, except on the recommendation of the Governor" and "Motions may be moved at this stage to reduce any grant but not to increase or alter the destination of a grant." If you, Sir, kindly compare section 79(2) of the Government of India Act with section 107 of the Assembly Procedure Rules, you will find that the appropriate sections and rules have been fully complied with. According to the motions which are known by the name of cut motions, they were moved in the Assembly with reference to 18 of the demands which have been assented to by this House. No question whether section 93 was there or not or the House was prorogued or not, the subjects under those 18 heads were assented to by this Assembly, and the question of lapsing does not arise. With regard to the 16 other items for which motions were pending before the House, not because of section 93, but because of the prorogation of the House, those motions lapsed under the rules of business of this Assembly.

Now, Sir, individual Ministers have again given notice of motions concerning the 16 demands which were not voted upon by the Assembly in the last session, and here we should proceed under section 107(*1*) of the Assembly Procedure Rules. These motions have been given notice of by the Ministers concerned; the motions are before the Assembly; under the rules honourable members of this House are entitled to table cut motions

and that they have done and they are now to be considered by the House. Sir, I do not find that there is any other procedure that is laid down either in the Government of India Act or in our Procedure Rules. Sir, the Government have been proceeding absolutely in accordance with the provisions contained in the Government of India Act and the Procedure Rules of this Assembly. Perhaps members of the Opposition are thinking of the procedure followed in the House of Commons. There, there is a Finance Act, but we have no such procedure with regard to the budget of this province. The budget is considered piecemeal by the Assembly and there is no such procedure here that the Finance Act has to be passed. In England the question of the entire budget as a piece of legislation comes in, but here no such question does arise. The only question is that the financial statement has to be laid before the House and that was done in accordance with the provisions of law. Now only the remaining portion of the budget has got to be taken up. Therefore, Sir, I request you to hold that the procedure that has been adopted by Government is perfectly in order.

Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it appears to me that there are some misapprehensions when you ask the House to suggest as to how this defect can be remedied. Why I say this, Sir, is this. It is for the sponsors of the resolution to find out as to whether a particular resolution which they are placing before the House is in order or not. So far as you the Speaker are concerned, your duty is to decide as to whether the motion which is before the House is in order or not. The moment you come to the decision that this motion is not in order, it is for the Government to find out proper ways and remedies and they may consult their legal advisers or they may consult His Excellency the Governor or Mr. Amery or anybody they like. So far as this House is concerned and so far as your duty is concerned, you are simply to decide as to whether this motion is in order or not and not bother your head about the constructive proposal as to what should be done by the Government. If the Government feel that there is no way out of it, then it will be for the Government to move Parliament to amend the law as suggested by my learned friend Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee. If there be any way to justify any proposals which will regularise the whole thing, let them come forward with their proposals and be prepared to support them in the House. A very sad spectacle has been shown by the Hon'ble Finance Minister in defending his own proposal. He has simply stated something was done before section 93 came into operation, something was left out, we are now weaving the thread; but that is no answer to the legal proposition which is before the House. There is the Government of India Act; there are the rules which have got to be interpreted, and I respectfully submit, Sir, that the learned Speaker should only decide as to whether this motion is in order, and if he finds it is not in order then he must throw it out and it is for the Government to find out a remedy to remedy the situation.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: May I say a few words, Sir, to simplify the matter? The greater portion of the budget was passed by the previous

Assembly and the lesser portion had to be passed. Then the Governor takes over and passes the entire budget. Now what happens? We have been given a new Cabinet and only a portion to pass; how must we pass the lot? Well, if we are given a portion we cannot pass the lot, and as we have to pass the lot we cannot be given a portion. Therefore it is not in order. (Applause from the Opposition benches.)

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no doubt that the question before the House bristles with difficulties, but, Sir, the basic consideration that ought to guide us in finding a correct answer to the question is, I think, whether the budget is a unitary document or not. It is true that there is no provision for a Finance or an Appropriation Act in the Constitution Act but at the same time it is true that the budget as envisaged in the Government of India Act of 1935 is a unitary document. In support of my proposition, Sir, I would invite your attention to section 78(1). You will notice that sub-section (1) of section 78 runs thus:

> "The Governor shall in respect of every financial year cause to be laid before the Chamber or Chambers of the Legislature a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the province for that year, in this part of the Act referred to as 'the Annual Financial Statement'."

There can be no doubt, Sir, that the statement envisaged in section 78(1) is one statement, one document.

Then, Sir, you will notice that in section 80 it is said that (1) the Governor shall authenticate by his signature "a schedule" specifying such and such things, and then sub-section (2) of section 80 refers to "the schedule so authenticated." So also sub-section 3 of section 80 refers to "the schedule" so authenticated. So, you will see that the budget even in this Legislature has to be one financial statement comprising certain estimates under certain heads of revenue and estimates under certain heads of expenditure. Then Sir, you will notice that the budget has got to be approved or rather authenticated in one schedule which will authenticate all the several sums required for charged expenditure as well as the grants that have been voted by the Legislature. That is, Sir, undeniable. Not only that. If you turn to the memorandum that has been circulated, the very first paragraph of the memorandum says that "the Government are advised that on the revocation of proclamation under section 93 of the Government of India Act the grants authorised by the Governor cease to have force and the revived operation of sections 78, 79 and 80 requires that all expenditure incurred after the revocation of the proclamation shall be covered by a schedule duly authenticated under section 80". This schedule, Sir, must refer to all expenditure under all heads. This schedule cannot refer only to those heads of expenditure which were not passed in the last session of the Assembly. The schedule contemplated here will have to cover expenditure under all budget heads. If that be so, Sir, there is no escape from the conclusion that the whole budget estimates of "the annual financial

statement" as it is called incorporating expenditure under all the heads, have got to be presented or represented to this House.

Then, Sir, you will see that the notification that was issued after the promulgation of the proclamation under section 93 also took the view that the budget was a unitary document. The notification did not take any notice of the fact that grants under certain heads of expenditure were passed by the Legislature. The notification included the whole of the annual estimate of expenditure for 1943-44—heads of expenditure which were passed by the Assembly as well as heads of expenditure which were not passed by the Assembly. Therefore, the notification clearly proceeded on the footing that the annual statement as referred to in section 78(1) is one unitary statement.

Sir, the learned Chief Whip of the Government Party made a slight mistake in the matter of dates. He said that the grants that were made by the Assembly were not wiped out by the proclamation under section 93. If that be so, he ought to have informed the House why then the notification under the proclamation included those heads of expenditure which were passed by the Assembly. Why were not those grants that were passed selected to be the subject of an authenticated schedule under section 80? But he went further and even said that those votes were nullified by the prorogation of the Assembly before. He made a mistake there, I believe. The Assembly was prorogued at least 25 days after the proclamation was issued, that is, after the notification passing the annual estimate of expenditure for 1943-44 was issued. Then, Sir, you have been asked by the Government to hold that these motions are all in order. If you do hold that view, what would be the consequence? In the first place, your decision, Sir, will mean that the budget is not a unitary document. Your decision will mean that the budget can be taken and passed piecemeal and that certain portions of the budget can be passed in one session and certain others in another session. Your decision will further mean in that case that the budget will have to be authenticated not by one schedule but by more than one schedule. Your decision, if it is in favour of the Government view, will land us in so many difficulties; and not only the budget will have to be taken piecemeal and authenticated piecemeal which is not the scheme of the Government of India Act but even demands for grants will have to be passed which are all uncertain, unascertained and of unspecified amounts. My friend, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee quoted to you sub-section (2) of section 79 which speaks of "amount specified". I will, Sir, invite your attention to section 80 which also speaks of definite amounts. Section 80(1)(*a*) refers to the grants made by the Assembly under the last preceding section, that is section 79 which speaks of specified amount. Sub-section (*b*) of section 80(1) refers to the "several sums" required to meet the expenditure charged on the revenues of the province, and the proviso to sub-section (1) of section 80 runs thus: "Provided that, if the Assembly have refused to assent to any demand for a grant or have assented to such a demand subject to a reduction of the amount specified therein, the Governor may, in his opinion, etc., etc." You will find again, Sir, the words "the amount specified therein". You will therefore see

that so far as the Government of India Act and the relevant sections regarding presentation and passing of the budget are concerned, they speak only of definite sums and of specified amounts. The motions which have now been presented before the House are therefore, I submit, irregular. In answer to your specific question as to "what then is your idea, do you think that the whole budget will have to be brought before the Assembly", I say "yes", because I hold that the budget is considered as a unitary document in the Government of India Act. If you will further enquire "well, what will be the position of the amounts that have been spent during the interval between the 1st April and the 24th April", to that I cannot give a definite answer now and here immediately. It is a very difficult point and I believe Government will have to take the advice of their law officers, and we on our side shall——

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your last point which you are talking about?

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: As regards the amount that was spent during the period from the 1st April to the 24th April, whether this amount will appear as a charged amount or not, or how this amount will appear in the budget, that is a very difficult point and on that point, I am sure, Government will take the opinion of their law officers——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Chaudhuri, may I interrupt you for a moment? Government certainly have got the opinion of their legal officers and their opinion it appears is clear to this effect that they are asking for the assent of the Assembly to that part of the demands only which were not voted upon *minus* the expenditure incurred between the 1st April and the 24th April.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Can we be supplied with a copy of the legal opinion taken by Government for your help at least, because we are informed on the authority of one of the highest Government law officers in Bengal that he was never approached and he never gave any opinion.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point you have to decide is whether the law or the practice of this House considers the budget as one piece. In the House of Commons they bring in an Appropriation Bill and then it is passed as one piece of legislation and called the Financial Act. Here, on the other hand, Sir, during my limited experience of this Assembly, we pass demands and grants. Government as such does not come in at all. It is the Governor who sends the financial statement and it is he who authenticates everything. The agents of the Governor here are the officers of the Crown called Ministers.

Now, Sir, an interesting point for you and me to consider is not only the letter of the law but also the spirit and the actual facts of the situation as they were and are. Those who are opposing the introduction of these demands today were the people who appealed for our support and they managed to get it for the 18 grants already passed up to the 28th March last. The remaining 16 are also their own proposals. What will happen to the expenditure between the 1st and the 24th April, 1943, is a matter

which does require serious consideration, but from the way I look at the position now before us, I am of the opinion that this House cannot, and under the law, is not allowed to accept the budget as one single piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, 18 grants have already been passed by the Assembly and there are 16 grants yet to be passed. (Interruption.) I beg of you, Sir, to stop these interruptions. I have control over myself but I shall not tolerate these interruptions.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We want to be enlightened by Mr. Siddiqi on the point of law.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I cannot help dunces. I am speaking——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Nonsense.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will you allow that word, Sir? Is that permitted at all?

Mr. SPEAKER: You of all people should know it is.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: My submission is——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. I would humbly and respectfully request you to confine every speaker to the point before the Assembly and not allow him to deliver a long lecture on matters which have no relevance. Let us have Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi's brilliance in regard to points of law. My point of order is you kindly ask Mr. Siddiqi to confine himself to relevant issues.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, I would have been very glad if I could see the discussions in this House on this great constitutional question carried on as in a court, but this is not a court. I have got to allow a certain amount of latitude. The members are not trained lawyers arguing before a court.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: He is a barrister.

Mr. SPEAKER: He may be a barrister and there are others who may be barristers. You yourself are a barrister. You will address the court in one way and when you address this House you will address in a different way.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: There are some exceptions under the Indian Penal Code.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: A point of order, Sir, as I have always understood it, is a point on which the Chair gives its ruling. I would like to quote an Urdu idiom to put the objections raised in their proper setting. The honourable member objects to my giving an explanation. He listened to the many speeches but objects mine. This is like ہاتھی تو نکل گیا مگر دم اٹک گئی He has allowed the elephant to pass through but objects to the tail going through. (Interruption.) What I would most respectfully

submit is that much has been made of the rule containing the words "a schedule". As you ruled yesterday under the General Clauses Act, a singular covers the plural and therefore "a schedule" may also go into the plural and mean more than one schedule. The Governor could very well have presented a schedule to us for the 18 items passed and another for the period from the 1st to the 24th April and a third for the remainder of the period. "A schedule" does not necessarily mean only one schedule covering all the aspects of the problem.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: May I ask my honourable friend Mr. Siddiqi to explain one point?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I shall not give explanations beyond those I have already submitted.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Let him ramble.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: If this kind of thing is allowed——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If that kind of thing is allowed this kind of thing may also be allowed.

Mr. SPEAKER: If my decision is that this motion is in order you will lose a pretty good time. Therefore it is better that you should not interrupt him.. Let us hear him.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Eighteen grants have been passed and there are only 16 grants remaining. These are their own demands. The main point to which I beg to draw your attention is whether this House has discussed the budget according to the rules and according to the lines laid down by the Act.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: May I just ask one question of my friend Mr. Siddiqi? He was, I believe, supporting the Government, but in one of his last sentences he said there was a reference under section 80 to a schedule, and that it might mean more than one schedule. Does he suggest that this is a new schedule which the Governor is now asking the House to approve? Is it the same schedule or are two schedules necessary? Is he supporting Government, or is he supporting us?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: If you permit me, Sir, I shall answer it. I have never said——. (Interruption.) Will you please stop the interruption? If this sort of thing is permitted, we——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, you have been a member in this House for a pretty long time and you know one another.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That is not fair, Sir. There is no reason why a special license should be granted to one.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have never suggested that. I have never done that.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Does the Hon'ble Minister mean that it applies to Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi or anybody else?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: In this House whenever a constitutional point has arisen I have never spoken as a party man and I hope to God I shall not. Speaking with that attitude of mind I want to inform the honourable member from the University of Calcutta that a schedule has not been given because it is perhaps the intention of the Governor to give one schedule for all grants. He could have given two and he could have given half a dozen. Does that meet his query?

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: I would add only one argument to the arguments of my esteemed friend, Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri. Supposing the motion is in order you would have to allow the members of this House to move motions for reduction. You know that in moving a motion for reduction of a grant a specified amount by which the demand has to be reduced has got to be mentioned. If the amount of the grant is not known how can any member move a motion for reducing the total amount by any amount? Therefore I am of opinion that this motion cannot be held to be in order.

Mr. MANMATHA NATH ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir,——

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: May I say, Sir, a few words?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already called Mr. Manmatha Nath Roy.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: We are far away to catch your eyes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall remember that.

Mr. MANMATHA NATH ROY: The procedure laid down by the Government of India Act for the preparation of the annual financial statement for the year 1943-44 was not completed in March last as the voting was interrupted on the 29th March. The Government of India Act contemplates that a statement in order to be complete must provide for supplies to all the different departments. This procedure was not completed. It was followed by the Governor's budget. What was the result? The result was that the voting which took place up to the 28th of March lapsed. Therefore it is clear that another financial statement for the year 1943-44 has now to be introduced again in this House. With regard to the question as to whether the financial statement would cover the expenditure for the period from 1st April to 24th April I am also definitely of opinion that the expenditure during this period must find a place in that financial statement. Of course all the items of this period will be open to criticism but the question whether they can be voted upon is a question which is not free from difficulty.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the presentation of the budget in the last session I think it was presented as an item of business and not as several items of business. Under section 79 of the Government of India Act this House is entitled to passing it or

throwing it out or passing it with reductions by way of cut motions. Whatever was done in the last session, I think, Sir, the budget was one entire piece of business and it is quite clear that it lapsed in its entirety as a result of the promulgation of section 93 or of the prorogation of the House. The budget contained several heads of expenditure and days were allotted for discussion on those heads and vote was actually taken on some of those heads of expenditure as demands for grants. The last date on which we met was the 29th of March and the House exercised its right of voting the demands up to the 27th of March. The entire budget, Sir, as it was presented to the House, was not passed in the last session. Some of the grants were voted upon already and then the unfortunate event happened on the morning of the 29th March when you, Sir, adjourned the House. Then came the promulgation of section 93 of the Government of India Act on the night of the 31st of March and the rights and privileges of this House and the entire constitution were suspended. The budget was not passed even on the 31st of March when section 93 was promulgated. This House was to pass the entire budget in the course of the last session but as soon as the constitution was suspended it remained half finished, and then came in the authenticated budget of the Governor. The expenditure incurred thereafter from the 1st of April was not done from the budget passed by this House but from the budget authenticated by the Governor. Then on the 24th of April last suspension of constitution was withdrawn and Ministers were appointed and the House regained its rights and privileges. I ask, Sir, what would be the true interpretation of the withdrawal of section 93 on that date when the rights and privileges of this House revived. Sir, my humble submission to you is that when the budget which could not be passed in the last session due to that unfortunate incident has again come before us, you must consider the whole aspect of the case before you give your ruling. Sir, after the withdrawal of section 93, the House was prorogued on the 24th April, and I ask what is the effect of this prorogation? I submit that since the rights and privileges of this House revived after the revocation of section 93 and this House has again got control over the business which was left over during the budget session, the House must have the privilege of having the entire budget for its consideration.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Sir, it is a matter of unusual importance and this is a question which ought to be discussed as beyond any party politics. It not only concerns the privilege of the House but it also concerns the administration of the whole province. Therefore in discussing this question it is no use submitting before you certain opinion which is not supported by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, which this House is bound to follow. The honourable member for the Calcutta University in his inimitable style has placed before the House all the facts relating to this important question. He has pointed out chronologically what has happened; he has also drawn attention of the House to the several sections of the Government of India Act which must be complied with if we have got to pass a valid budget. I have not heard anything in reply to that either from the Hon'ble the Finance Minister or from the Chief Whip of the Government. The question is whether after the prorogation of the last

session of the Assembly it can be said that the remaining portion of the budget can be brought in and passed. The Hon'ble the Finance Minister said that the situation is unprecedented and therefore an unprecedented solution has been sought against the provisions of the Government of India Act, if I am not mistaken. But I have looked up the point and I was expecting that my friend Mr. Stark would at least assist the Speaker by pointing out what happened in his own country in such a situation. In this connection I may refer to page 499 of May's Parliamentary Practice, 13th Edition, where it is laid down that if prorogation or dissolution of Parliament takes place when the House is in possession of the Appropriation Act, all the grants of the Commons are thereby nullified and the same must be voted again in the next session before a legal appropriation can be effected.

Now, this clearly puts the question beyond any doubt. Admittedly in this case there has been a prorogation. If the Assembly was simply adjourned for a time and then it reassembled there could be some ground for arguing that the budget grants which remained to be passed or voted upon would be discussed. There may be some ground for arguing that the budget grants which remained to be passed or voted upon can be discussed though there are obvious difficulties having regard to the provisions of the Act that it must be one annual statement and one schedule to be authenticated, but I submit the question of prorogation is a settler. The prorogation is a constitutional irregularity, as thereby all the grants are nullified and the sums must be voted again in the next session before a legal appropriation can be effected. I almost thought that the Chief Whip of the Government knew about this provision and therefore he was trying to draw a distinction where none existed regarding Finance Act and Appropriation Act. As you are aware, Sir, even if the grants are voted upon they are not legalised until authentication of the schedule just as grants voted upon in the Parliament are not legalised until there is the Appropriation Act. Therefore if a Parliament is dissolved and prorogued before an Appropriation Act legalising the grant, all the grants are nullified and the sums must be voted again in the next session. This, I submit, puts the whole question beyond any doubt and the way in which the Government have put forward the proposals for voting upon the remaining grants must be held to be not in order, firstly, because of the fact of the prorogation, secondly, because it cannot be brought piecemeal, thirdly, because there cannot be more than one annual statement, there cannot be more than one authentication of the schedule. If they wanted to bring it in any other way it would be irregular, it would be outside the provisions of the Government of India Act—sections 78, 79, 81.

Then again the question arises that unless specific grants are provided how are we going to table cut motion? Your office will reject as out of order any cut motion which does not mention specifically the amount against which the cut motion is moved and who knows that with an unspecified amount the cut motion will not exceed the amount which probably is contemplated in that grant. Having regard to all these insuperable difficulties I ask the Government to consider whether they will land themselves into a morass by trying to get the remaining grants passed so that they will be landed with a piecemeal budget with two annual statements and whether

afterwards there will be difficulties. I hope that you will give a ruling so that the expenditure of the province of Bengal may be legally incurred without any trouble, without having to go to law court to have a decision that this is beyond the acts of the Governor. This Assembly cannot do anything beyond the provisions of the Government of India Act.

I also would sound another note of warning. Let us hope that in this case they will not think of another ordinance either. That will also be beyond their powers and we hope we shall not have to waste our time and that of the Judges in canvassing that such an ordinance is also *ultra vires*.

With these words I hope you will hold that the motion is not in order.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I want to say a few words on one point only, viz., whether under the Government of India Act a budget is an indivisible unit. I will refer to section 78(2) of the Government of India Act. It says: The estimates of expenditure embodied in the annual financial statement shall show separately—

(*a*) the sums required to meet expenditure described by this Act as expenditure charged upon the revenues of the province; and

(*b*) the sums required to meet other expenditure proposed to be made from the revenues of the province.

I would also refer to rule 106 of our Rules of Business. It runs thus: A separate demand shall ordinarily be made in respect of the amount proposed for each department of the Government provided, etc. A separate demand shall be presented.

Now, a confusion has arisen in the minds of many members of the House on account of the fact that they have not realised the distinction between the procedure in the House of Commons and the procedure laid down by the Government of India Act. It has already been pointed out that in England a Finance Bill is presented before Parliament. Now, whenever a Bill is presented, it cannot be passed piecemeal. There is a first reading of the Bill, then there is a second reading and the Bill does not become law unless it is passed in the third reading. But so far as our demands are concerned, these are not of that nature at all. Separate demands have to be brought and if one demand is passed, that is passed for all time to come subject only to the fact that it has to be authenticated by the Governor. There is no provision in law under which a demand that has already been passed can be reopened in another session. Therefore, I think, the whole confusion has arisen on account of our failure to look into the distinction between the procedure as it obtains in England and the procedure laid down in the Government of India Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Khan, I am glad that you have introduced this thing. I shall be very glad if you point out what actually happens in the House of Commons. There a Finance Bill is introduced, it is debated upon and then passed or is there anything more?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I do not know the details. It is sure and certain that even in the House of Commons a Bill has to go

through several readings and it must go through the final reading before it can be passed. Therefore, I think if there is no doubt about that—

Mr. SPEAKER: You say that the procedure prescribed in the House of Commons is that there it is a Bill. The budget as it is presented here is not in the form of a Bill. It is only a demand presented before the House.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: May I just put one question? A very interesting point has been raised by Mr. Tamizuddin Khan with regard to the analogy as to what takes place in the House of Commons. There the budget is presented in the form of a Bill, one indivisible Bill. So far as this Legislature is concerned in section 78(1) the words used are "a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the province for that year, in this part of this Act referred to as 'the annual financial statement'." So that if it was a Bill, one single indivisible Bill in the House of Commons, it is one single indivisible annual statement before this Legislature. There is hardly any difference.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I maintain that up till now no honourable member from the other side of the House has been able to show that there is any specific clause or section either in the Act or in the rules which is against the procedure that has been suggested by Government in regularising the budget. A mere statement of what took place at the time when the Assembly was prorogued or how it was prorogued does not show that there is any clause in the Act which prevents Government from following this procedure. A controversy has arisen whether the budget is to be taken as one or it is to be taken piecemeal. I maintain with equal force as the honourable members on that side maintain that there is nothing in the Act in sections 78, 79 and 80 by which it can be shown that the budget is to be treated as one and not separately. As far as we are concerned we have taken the best legal opinion and we have been advised to follow the procedure which we have adopted. You yourself also know that the best legal opinion which Government is entitled to take has been taken. The opinion is that the procedure that we are following is correct. If these honourable members who claim to be the members of the Bar also claim that they are better judges of law, then of course it is a different matter. Perhaps the Deputy Leader may claim to be a bigger lawyer than the Advocate-General.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: What about the Federal Court and High Court?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: We can only have guidance on a difficult question from what is recognised to be the best legal opinion.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Do you mean to say "Advocate-General"?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Yes.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Let him come and face the House.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The Hon'ble the Speaker had also discussed the matter with the Advocate-General. Now, I submit before the House what is the fundamental principle and object behind the whole procedure that is laid down. The object is to obtain the verdict of the House as regards the money that is to be spent during the financial year.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Whatever may be the method?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That is the object. This House has got the right to express its opinion and allow supplies to the Government for the current financial year. Now we have got to see whether this object is being fulfilled or not. Let us see that if any other method is adopted whether we will be able to further this object or by the adoption of other methods that are being proposed or suggested we will be jeopardising the rights and privileges which the members enjoy. This, I consider, is a very important consideration. If we adopt any other procedure than the one which we have asked the House to accept, then the House will be in a more dangerous position. The budget in that case should be brought *de novo* and then I submit that that will be to a certain extent curtailment of the rights and privileges of the House.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: How?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Because already the members have had the privilege of expressing their opinion on 18 grants. The other 16 grants can be voted upon and discussed within the next two days.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How does it curtail the rights?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, it is said that this method is not correct and that the budget should be placed *de novo*. This may take six weeks, 12 weeks, or four months before the House may be in a position to express its opinion.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Why such a long time?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Because to be able to satisfy the House we will have to give specific amounts which I think under any circumstances can never be correctly obtained. The specified amount that has been spent during the period from 1st April to 24th April can never be correctly gauged. Therefore something you will have to accept as approximate. To be able to get that approximate figure will take the department at least six weeks to eight weeks time. I have just consulted the Secretary. If you follow the normal method then there is no reason why the budget in its normal way should not be proceeded with. Otherwise, as I have said you will have to wait for at least six weeks for that is the usual number of days which are required for the preparation of a budget. Then there are other factors also. There are Puja holidays and Ramzan both coming in one after another. It is therefore extremely debatable if it will be possible for the House to meet before November.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: On a point of order, Sir. Are these relevant?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed all sorts of things.

Mr. I. D. JALAN: But not from the Chief Minister.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: You will allow the Ministers one point. I think one of the speakers—I think it was Dr. Syamaprosad Mookerjee who said that here the Government had been carrying on with unauthorised expenditure for 3 months by your action.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Could we summon the House?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: If this procedure is ruled out of order and the budget is to be presented *de novo*, you will be permitting the Government to carry on with unauthorised expenditure for some more months.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: That is the inevitable effect of what has been done before.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Therefore the privilege of the members to express their opinion on the budget at the earliest opportunity will be denied. The question here is which is the greater evil.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Illegal budget is the greatest evil.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Merely by declaring the budget an illegal budget it does not become an illegal budget. The question before the House is which is the better method, and whether members of this House are at a disadvantage because of the procedure which we have adopted. What is the right they have got? To express an opinion on the grants to be moved. They have already expressed their opinion on the grants. There are some 16 items remaining. I submit that there is no section by which you can disallow the verdict of the House and bring out a new issue. The House has expressed its verdict on 18 items. There is nothing to show in the Act that it should be treated as cancelled. I say the provisions of the Act have been complied with. (Cries of "No", "no" from the Opposition Benches.) It is only for the remaining 16 items that we have got to come before the House. It has been argued that because of the prorogation and because of section 93 there has been an *interregnum* and that therefore all that had taken place has to be taken into account. I submit that there is nothing to show that we have got a rule that under certain circumstances the matter that has been placed before the Assembly is washed out, if there is a prorogation. It has already been said in the matter of Bills, even in this House, after prorogation we have got to give fresh notice. The same is the case with resolutions and questions. These are specifically provided. I submit, unless there is a specific provision in the rules or in the Act, that if a thing is not continued we have got to assume that it is the privilege of this House that whatever has been decided should not be questioned. It is the right of every member to express his opinion on the grants. The members have expressed their opinions. You

cannot challenge that verdict unless you can show that there is a specific and clear indication in any rule or section that this is to be treated as cancelled.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Section 80 says that.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It does not apply to this case. (Interruption.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I would request you, gentlemen, not to interrupt the Hon'ble Minister. If you want to say anything I shall again allow you.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: The Hon'ble Minister goes on repeating that there is nothing in the Act which is not true.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I submit that there is another consideration which I would like to place before the House very seriously. Supposing the funeral oration to which we listened yesterday——

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Funeral oration of the Governor!

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Funeral oration of the late Ministry.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Do dead men give an oration?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It has been said that the present Ministry has got no majority and the present Ministry has got no popular support. If that had been true today it would be the Government who would have asked "Let this be postponed for 4 months and a fresh budget be brought in".

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: It is extremely discourteous to interrupt the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Hon'ble Leader of the House, but I am raising this point of order: Is his speech in order and relevant to the issue before the House?

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I would like to raise a point of order. The question before the House is——

Mr. SPEAKER: It is already half past seven.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I am only putting a point of order. I shall do it in a couple of minutes. The question before the House is whether the Government have brought these motions of demands for grants according to the provisions of law. Sir Nazimuddin's argument is that if some stupid idiot commits blunders these blunders must be condoned, otherwise inconvenience would result. I wish to give Sir Nazimuddin and his supporters this challenge let them prorogue the House now and let them face the country. (Interruption and uproarious scenes.)

Mr. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned for 15 minutes for prayers.

(The House was then adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I do not want to take any more time, but there are only two things which I would like the honourable members of the House to take into consideration particularly. One is, supposing the House had met and this procedure had been given notice of it was possible that the Government found themselves in a minority and the Opposition were in a majority. Supposing the Government came forward with that plea, would you, Sir, in those circumstances consider the rights and privileges of the members? What would have been your attitude? What would be the implication if the thing had been postponed and allowed to come in after another four months. The reverse has got to be seen. You have got to consider whether this thing which we are placing before the House gives the members, particularly the members of the Opposition a fair chance, a fair opportunity, a reasonable opportunity—an opportunity which their rights and privileges demand: that opportunity is being given to them to criticise the budget, to express their opinion and, what is more, to express their opinion on the actions of the Ministry itself.

Then, Sir, there is another question which I would like the House to take into consideration. Supposing the budget was going on and in between on the third day of the budget the Ministry was defeated and a new Ministry came in power; the budget would go on as usual in that case.

Then there is the last question: the Hon'ble the Leader of the Opposition has suggested by way of challenge that we should face the constituencies. I may remind him that previously at Natore and other places we have met his challenge.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Are we concerned with Natore or with Patuakhali? (Laughter.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the very able exposition of the point of order raised by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri I did not feel that I could help you with any additional suggestion until I found that the Hon'ble the Chief Minister tried to take you astray. I submit that the main argument that I could follow of Sir Nazimuddin apart from his embellishments——

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the pull from both sides will keep me at my seat.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I hope you are strong enough to resist either side.

Sir Nazimuddin's argument was that this was the only possible method by which Government could come before the House for regularising the budget, and that any other alternative would lead the House to a position which would either take away its rights and privileges or might make the passage of the budget quite impossible. I submit this argument is erroneous. In the first place Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri made it quite clear that

the budget is one unitary statement of the financial position of the province in which the whole income is allocated under certain heads and the whole thing has to be viewed as such. Certain parts of that had been assented to by the House under certain premises and under certain circumstances and the then Opposition had moved certain cut motions because the convention of this House is that members of the Government party do not move cut motions. They can raise such points and can have them decided upon in party meetings. On the assurances of the then Ministers in charge certain budget grants had been assented to by the House. We would like to know whether the present Government stands by those assurances. If the House has assented, as we presume the House has done, the assent was conditional upon certain fundamental premises. And if those premises disappear the assent naturally has to be reviewed. With regard to the other point the difficulties of putting forward a fresh budget in the course of the next three months or so, I submit that the Leader of the House could not have used this argument if he had looked up his diary. The *Puja* holidays come in the month of October and the *Ramzan* in the latter half of September and part of October. Taking the worst view of things, therefore, Sir, if the whole budget is to be gone through, the House does not require more than fifteen days, which is the minimum. Some time must perhaps be allotted for general discussion. Then there should be a period of four days intervening for notices; seven days will be required for notices thus making up altogether 26 days. In calculating this I am not concerned with the Finance Department. The department ought to be able to prepare the budget as quickly as possible. So far as the House is concerned at the most we shall not take more than one month and we will have ample time before the *Puja* holidays and the *Ramzan* to complete the whole procedure. So far as the point raised by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister is concerned, I am not quite sure of his acquaintance with the department in the short interval, but I am prepared to credit the department with a little more intelligence and assiduity. The department has got the whole schedule, department by department, ready and prepared and this has actually been prepared after three months of discussion before the debate in the previous session. If a portion thereof has to be taken out, namely, the portion of expenditure between the 1st and 24th April, the department can either ask the Accountant-General's office to submit a list of actual expenditure during that period; in course of seven days this could be done, or, Sir, they can, if they are not satisfied with the report submitted to them that there have been some expenses which might not still be accounted for, do another thing, namely, that they can assume a lump grant for the time being and come forward with a reduced demand on such basis and then put forward at a later date a supplementary budget regularising the small adjustment that might be required so that for the time being with the figures that they can get from the department in two days' time they can proceed with the budget.

Then there is another factor to which I wish to draw your attention. We know, Sir, that during this intervening period and also during the period that this Ministry has been in office very large sums of money have

been spent and advanced beyond the budget proposals of certain grants. That being the position we should examine them here and now before the whole thing becomes difficult to reopen, and the Government should come forward with a full scheme of expenditure for the whole year and the advances meant for the different sections and heads of the departments as soon as they are in a position to estimate the same. I find there has been a very unfortunate practice growing in that large sums of money are spent on the authority of the Cabinet without coming before the House in due time, and on the last day a supplementary budget comes up. That was the position last year and that is the position this year also, and in such circumstances the House has to vote on a question which has already been *post mortem*. Money is spent and we have thereafter got to deal with the estimates *post mortem*. That is a position which no democratic Legislature can tolerate. We are then thrown into a helpless position. I submit that although the Government of India Act is silent about the time when the supplementary budget is to be put my reading of section 81 is that as soon as Government find that additional expenditure beyond that which is sanctioned is necessary, Government must come before the House. They cannot wait indefinitely although no particular date is given. Section 81 clearly gives the indication that as soon as Government is in a position to know that additional expenditure is likely to be involved, they must come before the House. They must not keep things back till the last day.

Sir, regarding the ground that the demands have not been specifically made, that is the point raised by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, no reply, no explanation has been put forward so far either by the Finance Minister or by the Chief Minister. So far as that point is concerned, we have had no assistance or no reply from the other side. I believe, in the circumstances you, Sir, in your wisdom, will hold that the point of order raised by Dr. Mookerjee is perfectly admissible and the whole procedure now proposed is incorrect, illogical and illegal.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir Nazimuddin, I have got doubts in my mind on certain points. I should feel obliged if you kindly try to enlighten me on them. You say that the budget is not one unitary document, it is not indivisible, but that it can be divided into parts. Now, do you maintain that the budget can be presented piecemeal?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Under section 78 it is one and it cannot be separated. But under section 79 it is not so. It is not necessary that it must be passed in the same month. If Government and the Accountant-General, Bengal, are prepared to allow the Ministry to incur expenditure without sanction, there is nothing to prevent half a dozen grants being voted upon in the month of March, another half a dozen in the month of April and another half a dozen in the month of May. I do not find any reason why that cannot be done under section 79.

Mr. SPEAKER: You mean to say that the presentation must be of the entire budget, but at the time of voting, the voting may take place

at different times under different heads. The presentation must be one presentation, but the voting of grants may be different.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Yes, Sir. Sections 78 and 79 are clear. The financial statement should be one so that everybody may know what is the position. Then the House should sanction grants under different demands. I can see no reason why this cannot be done. That is the only way to judge. There is no general question whether there is any bar, whether there is any handicap and whether the privilege of the House is in any way infringed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Therefore according to you there may be as many schedules as the Ministry may like.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Authentication may be of one or of separate schedules, but in the end the whole thing is authenticated.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I could not follow the Hon'ble Chief Minister. What is the reply he has given?

Mr. SPEAKER: According to him there may be as many schedules as they like but the financial statement should be one.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: May I just ask this question if there must be one financial estimate?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of order, Sir. I understood that the discussion had finished and now you only want for your own satisfaction the clarification of certain points. If the discussion start afresh we can begin all over again.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Mookerjee, I do not think it will be fair.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, you will give us an opportunity——

Mr. SPEAKER: If necessary, I will give you a chance tomorrow.

Sir Nazimuddin, it appears to me then that according to you the Governor could have signed a schedule with regard to grants that were assented to by this House in March.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: That is my own interpretation. As I read it, I see no bar to the Governor having signed a schedule.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now we come to another point. Is it the desire of the Government to have one schedule or to have more schedules than one after the House has assented to the demands now presented before the House?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: We have provided a day for the authentication of schedules and obviously after all the demands have been passed, there will be one schedule.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now, therefore, you want to have included in that schedule the expenditure incurred by the Governor between the 1st April and the 24th April also?

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: That cannot be.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: This amount has already been separately spent and as it is not possible to specify the amount, it will be there.

Mr. SPEAKER: You mean to say that the schedule will include the amount that has been spent under the authorisation of the Governor.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The schedule will just mention it as the amount cannot be separated and it has got to be there.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order? Does the procedure of the House permit the Chair to cross-examine members about what they propose to do and what they do not propose to do and so on. It may be, Sir, that the Chair wants assistance from the House, but I do not think it is correct for the Chair, in my humble opinion, to cross-examine a member of the House.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This is questioning the authority of the Chair. It cannot be permitted.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Members of the Government or members of the Opposition, Ministers or non-Ministers, they are all to be treated as members.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, it is far from me to cross-examine anybody.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You have been doing it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Excuse me, Mr. Siddiqi. Will you please listen to me?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I am standing on my rights as a member of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I quite appreciate the remark that you have made that it may not be fair for the Chair to cross-examine a member, but it is far from me to cross-examine anybody here. It may be your opinion that I was cross-examining the Chief Minister, but I may tell you that I already told the Chief Minister before I put any question to him that I wanted to remove my doubts with regard to certain matters regarding the position that Government has taken up. If he wished to give an answer he could give. If he did not like, I could not compel him to answer. Therefore I hold that what I have done is perfectly right. Sir, Nazimuddin, I do not want to put any further question to you unless you feel that it is

desirable that this matter should be cleared up before this House. If you do not care, I am not going to put any further question to you, because an objection has come from a member belonging to your party.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I would like to respectfully draw your attention to the fact that Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi has made it clear to the House that on constitutional issues he does not speak as a party member and we have got no control over him.

(Cries of "Oh oh" from the Opposition Benches.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, Nazimuddin, you know that we discussed this matter in the Chamber just now and with your full approval I put to you this question. If there had been the slightest indication of any unwillingness on your part, I would have been the last person to put any question to you. Now that these things have arisen, I am not going to ask you any more question. If I think it desirable I will hold a conference of the party leaders and others who may give me any assistance in this matter. I do not think I need detain the House any longer.

Adjournment.

It being 8-22 p.m. the House was adjourned till 4-45 p.m. on Wednesday, the 7th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 7th July, 1943, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 193 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Governing Body of the Midnapore College.

***23. Mr. KRISHNA PROSAD MANDAL:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state, with regard to the present Governing Body of the Midnapore College—

(*a*) the date of composition;

(*b*) the personnel; and

(*c*) who constituted the body and under what authority?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) 31st July, 1933.

(*b*) (1) The District Magistrate, Midnapore, *ex-officio* (President).

(2) The Principal, Midnapore College, *ex-officio* (Secretary).

(3) Mr. Sudhir Chandra Deb, Professor of History (elected representative of the teaching staff).

(4) Mr. Iswar Chandra Bisui, Professor of Physics (elected representative of the teaching staff).

(5) Rai Debendra Mohan Bhattacharyya Bahadur, Manager, Jhargram Raj Estate and Chairman of the Midnapore District Board and Municipality.

(6) Babu Jnanendra Nath Choudhury, Public Prosecutor and member of the Midnapore Municipality.

(7) Khan Sahib Maulvi Kabiruddin Ahmed, Pleader and member of the Midnapore Municipality and District Board.

(8) Maulvi Abu Ahmad, Pleader and Vice-Chairman of the Midnapore District Board.

(*c*) Government.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Government be pleased to answer the latter part of question (*c*), namely, under what authority was it constituted?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Under the terms of an agreement entered into by the Government with the College authorities in the year 1923.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Government be pleased to state what is the reason for not reconstituting the Governing Body for the last 10 years?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: First of all the Governing Body was constituted in the year 1933 and its term expired in 1936. Then it was extended for two years more, *i.e.*, up to 1938 academic year. Then there was another extension which was up to the present year 1943. At present there is a proposal before Government which they are considering. It is not known yet whether the same members will be there or some other names will be asked for.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state what are the reasons for these various extensions when other persons are available?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: The obvious reasons are that these gentlemen took very lively interest in the affairs of the College and that they were recommended very strongly by the District Magistrate for extension.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Does the Parliamentary Secretary mean to say that there is no other person interested in education in the district of Midnapore or town?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: That is more than I can say.

Mr. DEBENDRA LALL KHAN: With reference to answer (*b*) (5) and (7), will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state whether the descriptions given of members are correct?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: So far as Rai Debendra Mohan Bhattacharyya Bahadur is concerned, he is the Manager, Jhargram Raj Estate, and Chairman of the Midnapore District Board. But I understand that he is no longer the Chairman of Midnapore Municipality.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: What about No. 7?

(No answer.)

Construction of embankment on the Ichamati river around the Bil Hoglain in Khulna.

***24. Mr. PATIRAM ROY:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that in 1942 a flood of saline water issuing from the Ichamati river had washed away the cultivated lands measuring about 1,000 acres in some *bils* including the *bil* Hoglain by the side of the mauza Shibnagar in police-station Debhata in the district of Khulna;

(*ii*) that the above flood caused a great breach in the embankments surrounding the *bils* and a total annihilation of the food crops of the locality;

(*iii*) that a large number of the people of the locality has been in distress for the failure of the food crops;

(*iv*) that the breach in the embankment will affect the cultivation; and

(*v*) that a representation from the Shibnagar Palli Mangal Samiti was made to the Government regarding the construction of the embankments?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of taking early steps for the construction of the embankments?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) In June, 1942, there was a breach about 6 feet wide and 4 to 5 feet deep in the Ichamati embankment. Through it saline water entered the low fields and damaged about 500 bighas of paddy lands in the Susilganti and Sibnagar mauzas, mostly in the former.

(*iii*) Cultivators owning lands in the low or *bil* areas were affected.

(*iv*) No, as the breach was quickly closed.

(*v*) A representation was made to the Executive Engineer.

(*b*) The embankment belongs to private persons and the liability for its maintenance and reconstruction rests with the owners.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Are the Government aware that breaches do occur very frequently in these embankments?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: It occurred only in June, 1942.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iv*), will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state how long the breach remained unclosed?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Only for a short time.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: How long?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: It was closed before the rainy season was over.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do the Government know how long the breach remained unclosed?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: It was closed without delay.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do not the Government know the period?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Only for a short period.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do I understand him to say that the Government do not know how long the breach remained unclosed?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: No. Government on enquiry came to know that it remained open only for a few months and it was closed afterwards.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: For how many months?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: I cannot say exactly the length of time but it was closed as soon as it came to the notice of Government though it was not the Government's responsibility.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Government do not know then how long the breach remained unclosed?

(No answer.)

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the basis of the present information that only one breach occurred and no other?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: The Superintending Engineer caused an enquiry to be made by an officer of the Irrigation Department and on the basis of that enquiry information was given.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have acquired no authority to repair breaches in embankments?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Government have authority under section 7 of the Embankments Act on representation from tenants who apply to the Collector.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government take action on their own initiative without representation from the tenants?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: If a representation is made, then an enquiry is made and if the results of that enquiry are satisfactory, Government considers the question of taking action.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: With reference to the answer just now given that his information was based on the report of the Superintending Engineer, would the Parliamentary Secretary please tell the House whether the report of the Superintending Engineer states anything about the period for which the breach remained unclosed?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: The breach occurred in June, 1942. We have no information available about that in the file. From the file we don't find that any action was taken in June, 1942. Action was taken later. There is nothing in the records to show that the breach remained unclosed for months.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government consider the desirability of declaring the embankment as a public embankment?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: When a petition is filed Government will consider the matter.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Government consider the desirability of taking an initiative, with reference to answer (*b*), in the matter of asking the private owners for maintaining and reconstructing the embankments?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: If the honourable member so desires, Government will consider the case and take necessary steps.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Government be pleased to state whether in these days of "Grow More Food" campaign they think it necessary to have that breach embanked as early as possible?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: There is no breach at present.

Vice areas in the city of Calcutta.

*25. **Mr. C. GRIFFITHS:** (*a*) Has the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department been drawn to a public meeting recently held by the Sheriff at the Dalhousie Institute against the increase of "vice areas" in the city?

(*b*) Has the Hon'ble Minister received any petition on the subject?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the decision arrived at in the matter?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) I am informed that a meeting was held at the Dalhousie Institute on the 22nd December, 1942, but I do not know whether it was summoned by the Sheriff.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) I am informed that action has been taken to suppress the brothels in this area upon receipt of specific complaints from local residents.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister in charge be pleased to state by whom the meeting was summoned?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Government have no information.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Will Government be pleased to find it out?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: They may, if the honourable member so desires.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Are we to understand from answer (*c*) that brothels have been actually suppressed?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, in those areas, from where Government have received petitions from local residents, the brothels have been suppressed.

Mr. J. W. CHIPPENDALE: Is it not a fact that these brothel houses have been commandeered by the police and certain other people?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: That is not correct.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALLIK: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the dates when these applications were received by the Government?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: There is no information with regard to the dates because I find that the original petitions are missing from the custody of the Private Secretary of the then Chief Minister.

Mr. J. W. CHIPPENDALE: Will the Government be pleased to state whether or not these houses have been commandeered by the military authorities?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Government have no such information.

Srijut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: What are the areas where brothels have been suppressed on receipt of complaints from the local residents?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Wellesley Street, Free School Street and Dent Mission Road.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Government be pleased to state whether any actions were at all taken in this matter—no matter whether by the previous Ministry or by this Ministry?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMMED ALI: Yes, by this Ministry.

Jail clerks.

***28. Maulvi AZHAR ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether jail clerks in Bengal are ordinarily promoted to the cadres of Deputy Jailors?

(*b*) Is it a fact that in recent years the practice has been stopped?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) No.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Is the Parliamentary Secretary aware that the jail clerks recently recruited are graduates of the Calcutta University?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I hope you will permit me to explain the position in detail.

In 1925, the clerical and executive establishments were separated and as soon as this was done Deputy Jailors were ordinarily recruited from outside. Then subsequently this system was also changed and now ordinarily Deputy Jailors are recruited from the results of the Bengal Civil Service Examination. Recently, however, Government have again approved the policy of appointing four clerks to the posts of Deputy Jailors because of the urgent demand of Deputy Jailors in the Bengal jails and it was thought that if direct recruitment had been made then the candidates would have to be sent for special training, but if by promotion jail clerks were taken in no special training would be necessary. That is the reason why the appointments from clerks by promotion were made.

Balurghat incidents.

*27. **Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department aware of the serious allegations regarding looting and destruction of properties by the police taking place in village areas in the Balurghat subdivision during September last?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister also be pleased to state whether he has received in the first week of November, 1942, any report, regarding the incidents referred to in (*a*)?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of the said report?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any action has been taken to punish the offenders?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) and (*b*) I received during the early part of November, a report sent by the honourable member making certain allegations and also reports from the local officers upon the allegations made.

(*c*) and (*d*) No, Sir.

(*e*) I was satisfied on examining the papers that there was no ground for taking action.

Sir, before any supplementary questions are put, I wish to inform the House that the actions taken in connection with the Balurghat incidents were taken during the period of the late Ministry, and that, therefore, I may inform the honourable members that I have nothing further to add what I have already said, that the entire responsibility in this matter lay with the late Ministry.

Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: In view of the statement just made by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, may I make a request to him to make a further enquiry into the allegations made in the report?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have already stated that I have nothing further to add. All this took place in the regimé of the last Ministry and we take no responsibility for the actions of the last Ministry.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in view of the lawlessness committed by the police officers in Balurghat, Government is ready to appoint a non-official enquiry committee?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, this Government will always be prepared to enquire into allegations that are made if the incidents referred to take place during the regimé of this Government but this Government is not responsible for what had been done in the past and orders passed by the late Ministry were complete and final.

Point of Order.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: On a point of order, Sir. In view of the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister that he takes no responsibility for what his predecessor in office had done, is it not his duty then to look into the matter himself and do things on his own responsibility?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I admit it is a constitutional question, but may I ask a pertinent question as to what date and up to what time can things be reopened? Suppose, a new Ministry takes office and it has got to settle as to what questions you are entitled to reopen and what you are not entitled to reopen. Are you entitled to reopen all activities of the past Ministry unless there is something which is still occurring? I do not think it is advisable. That, as far as I understand, is the constitutional position.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir. We have no quarrel with Sir Nazimuddin. As regards the reply, he may choose to give any reply he thinks best, but, Sir, he has raised a constitutional point. He says that so far as the reply is concerned, the reply is that of the last Government. If that is so, then I ask who is this "I" in the answer to this question, namely, " 'I' was satisfied on examining the papers———". I ask who is this "I"?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: This is one of the held-over questions which should be obvious to honourable members if they had read the reply. I could not have received the question in November last. It is obvious, therefore, that I am speaking on behalf of the past Ministry. The Minister concerned had approved this answer and this question would have been answered by him had the question not been held over in the last session after some discussion.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: This is a very vital point as to who is this "I" which Sir Nazimuddin is not disclosing.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The ex-Chief Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think this point of order raises a very important question. When a question is asked from a Minister, the Minister in charge of the department for the time being is expected to give the reply. Whatever might have been done by the past Ministry even

when the replies are made ready, the procedure that this office, I mean the Assembly Office, follows is that these questions are returned for preparing revised answers. I think I got on a file an answer like this, that this was the reply of the last Ministry, and I did return it saying that the present Ministry should reply to the question and take the responsibility for the reply.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Sir, one more word on the point. I would suggest that if an Hon'ble Minister does not wish to make a reply to a held-over question, then he should be allowed the right to withdraw that. But he must accept responsibility for the reply.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think this is a question of very grave constitutional importance I do not see how a Minister who was not in office can accept responsibility for the actions of the previous Ministry.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is never expected that a Minister who was not in charge at the time when the incident took place should be made responsible for it, but you can give your own answer.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Giving my own answer means that I will either be supporting or criticizing the action of the previous Ministry. How can I do that? I did not discuss the matter with the then people and I do not know the circumstances in which the previous Ministry passed the order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir Nazimuddin, I am sorry that is not the point. The real point is that when a question is asked or if a question is answered, the answer is the answer of the Ministry then in power. There can be no doubt about that. You may give an answer or you may not give an answer. You may answer in whatever way you like, but it is your answer.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It is quite true we have given the answer, but, as I said, as far as this question is concerned, we cannot give any answer to any supplementary question.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it was open to the Hon'ble Minister to frame his reply in this way: Government received during the early part of November a report sent by the honourable member making certain allegations, etc., and in answer to (c) he might have said: Government was satisfied on examining the papers that there was no ground for taking action. Instead of doing that, he uses the first person singular number, takes the entire responsibility for these answers and in an absolutely nonchallant fashion now disowns the entire responsibility for the answers which begin with the word "I". One can never have conceived such irresponsibility on the part of a Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: This discussion itself is wrong. That ought not to have been made. Questions and answers cannot form the basis of a discussion.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Will these remarks be expunged from the proceedings?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I would like to know the procedure. Here a discussion has taken place on the presumption that a question has been framed——

Mr. SPEAKER: There cannot be any discussion on questions and answers.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Supposing a question has been answered and the answer has been delivered on the floor of the House. There have been supplementary questions and answers to supplementary questions given. Is it possible for the present Ministry to withdraw the entire answers and give different replies?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a hypothetical case, and I am not going to consider it.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, that is what exactly happened.

Mr. SPEAKER: It does not appear from this at all. If you bring in a concrete case, I will give my ruling.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sir, I may say that these replies were given on the 24th March and the proceedings of that day will show that. These answers were already given on the floor of the House on the 24th March.

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case, the proper procedure should have been to return it to the Assembly Office stating all these facts and then the proper thing would have been done by the Assembly Office.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: That was done. It was returned to the Assembly Department and they sent it back.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will look into this matter personally and see what happened.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. You were pleased to observe that there cannot be any discussion over a question. So, will it be in order that this discussion should remain in the proceedings?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will look into the matter.

Further Supplementaries to Starred Question No. 27.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the present Ministry takes responsibility for the answers which have been printed?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has made statements on that point times without number. You cannot compel him to make any further statement.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: In view of my last question whether Government is ready to form an enquiry committee to enquire into the Balurghat affair and the answer given by the Hon'ble Minister, will the Hon'ble Minister please state positively whether he is ready to have an enquiry committee to enquire into this matter? This is a point of privilege.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know how this question arises. My attention has been drawn to the proceedings of the last session and it appears that this very answer was delivered and that has been printed. There must have been some mistake somewhere and I will look into the matter.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, when this question has been replied to, may I put questions to elicit further information from the Hon'ble Minister?

Mr. SPEAKER: You can always do that, but it is plain that there has been some mistake somewhere.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what were the allegations made in the report of the member who put this question?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I have got nothing further to add to what I have already stated in the answer.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Sir, I refer to answer (*c*). In view of the fact that serious allegations have been made by an honourable member of this House and in view of all the discussion that has taken place just now over the question, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of reopening the question and examining the persons affected by violent repression?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I would refer the honourable member to the replies given on the 24th March.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: My question is addressed to the present Government. The present Government has got nothing to do with that answer.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I would refer the honourable member to the answers given on the 24th March.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Are we to understand that the present Government is to be deemed to have been acting on the 24th March?

(No answer.)

Substitution of Poundra Kshatriya for Pod.

*28. **Mr. PATIRAM ROY:** (*a*) With reference to the reply given to clause (*b*) of starred question No. 76 of the 14th December, 1939, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether the matter is still under consideration?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any formal notification has been issued instructing that the Pod Community should be mentioned in all documents as Poundra Kshatriya?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of—

(*i*) the said notification; and

(*ii*) the Government of India's note on it, if any?

(*d*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what step, if any, that has been taken on it?

(*e*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of expediting the matter?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) and (*d*) Do not arise.

(*e*) This Government has already recommended to the Secretary of State through the Government of India that the name of the caste "Pod" in the Scheduled Castes Order should be changed to "Poundra Kshatriya". The matter now rests entirely with the Secretary of State.

Departmental examination for promotion in the Calcutta Police Force.

***29. Mr. ABDUL KARIM:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that a system of departmental examination has been introduced in the Calcutta Police Force for promotion of officers in different ranks?

(*b*) Is it a fact that junior officers after passing the examination have been promoted to higher post in supersession of the claims of senior officers who have passed the said examination previously?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) No competitive examination is held, but tests are held to see whether officers have acquired sufficient professional knowledge for promotion.

(*b*) and (*c*) This is bound to happen occasionally. Passing the examination qualifies an officer to be considered for promotion but selection for promotion is not made according to seniority on the date on which an officer passes the examination but primarily on merit taking seniority also into consideration.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the sufferers are very often found to belong to the Muslim community?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, that is not correct.

Mr. ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED: Is it not a fact that an officer passing the departmental test is not superseded by an officer of the same grade as a rule in grade promotion but in rank promotion only?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Preference is given to merit. I may explain the position because there may be some misunderstanding. The procedure adopted is that a test is held to see whether an officer is qualified to earn his promotion and when an officer passes the test then his case is considered by a selection board composed of the Commissioner of Police who presides, and of all the Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of Police. The case of each individual officer is considered by the Board.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to give you a bit of advice. Don't be long; be brief.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, Sir. What I want to say is there can be no grievance regarding supersession.

Mr. ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED: My question has not been answered, Sir. Is it not a fact that an officer passing the departmental test is not superseded as a rule by an officer of the same grade in grade promotion?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I have already stated that seniority is not the only criterion. Many things are taken into consideration, but merit is the primary consideration for promotion.

Mr. ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED: My question has not been answered yet, Sir. Is it not a fact that in grade promotion merit is considered?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Merit is always taken into consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER: The principles are always there, seniority *plus* merit.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state in how many cases, if any, the claims of senior officers have been superseded?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a vague question.

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Sometimes senior officers are superseded for the reasons I have already stated.

Loans to small jute-growers out of the grant of the Central Government.

*30. **Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the amount which the Central Government advanced to this Province in last October of 1942 for loans to small jute-growers to enable them to hold their stock till prices improved;

(*b*) the amount that has been distributed up to date;

(*c*) the reasons for not distributing the whole amount or the major portion of it, as the case may be; and

(*d*) whether any conditions of restriction were laid before distribution; if so, what were they?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*) Rs. 1,00,00,000.

(*b*) Rs.5,10,427.

(*c*) When the decision to issue these loans was taken the price of jute was as low as Rs.3-8 per maund. By the end of November (1942), however, the price rose between Rs.8-4 and Rs.9 per maund. It was, therefore, considered unnecessary to help the small growers to hold their jute and consequently further distribution of these loans was stopped.

(*d*) Yes. The following instructions in the matter were issued:—

"(*a*) The loan shall only be granted on the production of a licence granted by the appropriate officer of the Jute Regulation Department stating the area on which the applicant was licensed to grow jute in 1942 and a statement by the grower that he still holds jute to the value of at least twice the amount of the loan applied for.

"(*b*) Loans shall be granted under rule 6(*3*) of the rules under the Agriculturists Loans Act on joint bond of a body of 5 or more co-villagers.

"It is to be noticed that *bargadars* are also eligible for loans on the joint bond system under rule 6(*3*).

"(*c*) The distribution of those loans shall be made under the special rules 19 to 25.

* * * * * * *

"(*e*) The applicant's licence shall be endorsed with the amount of the loan granted to him and he shall be clearly warned that any default in repayment will render him ineligible for a licence to grow jute in 1943."

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what has been done with the unexpended portion of the money?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Ultimately it has got to be refunded.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*c*) will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the price of rice when jute was sold at Rs. 8-4 and Rs. 9 a maund?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: This question does not arise out of that.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: The question is whether the price of jute went up when the rice was selling at a higher price?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Recruitment in Bengal Junior Civil Service.

10. Mr. KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of appointments made in the cadre of the Bengal Junior Civil Service (Executive) this year; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Caste Hindus,
(2) Scheduled Castes, and
(3) Muslims?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state—

(*i*) the reason of appointing so large a number; and
(*ii*) whether these posts are temporary?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) (*i*) 155.

(*ii*) (1) 58.
(2) 19.
(3) 78.

(*b*) (*i*) The honourable member is referred to the Home (Appointment) Department notification No. 4202A., dated the 7th October, 1942, published at page 2420 of the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated the 22nd October, 1942.

(*ii*) Yes.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: On a point of information, Sir. May I know why the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin is answering this question and not the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter entirely for the Ministers. It is not for you to ask.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain whether those appointments were made according to the Communal Ratio Service Rules of 1940?

Khan Bahdur MOHAMMED ALI: No, Sir.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for that?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: It was decided by the then Ministry that it was not necessary to apply those rules. The last Ministry

held that in the urgency of finding officers to carry out the policy of Government in the Department of Civil Supplies the special rules regarding communal ratio should not apply. The Revenue Department, the Co-operative Credit Department and the Jute Department were asked to nominate their best men for appointments to the temporary posts in the Bengal Junior Civil Service.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether no suitable Scheduled Caste candidates from these departments were available?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Suitable candidates who were available were appointed to the posts.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether by this new necessity the former Communal Ratio Service Rules were overruled?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, by the last Ministry.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the principle and policy which were followed in making these appointments?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I have already answered that question.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether this Ministry will undo the wrong done by the last Ministry?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The appointments have already been made, and it is not possible to undo the appointments. But the present Ministry will strictly adhere to the Communal Ratio Service Rules. In future all appointments will be made in accordance with these rules.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: In view of the fact that there has been a very small number of recruits from amongst the Scheduled Castes, as will appear from reply (*a*) (*ii*) (2), will the Government be pleased to state whether in future adequate compensation will be made in the matter of their recruitment in the Bengal Junior Civil Service?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Government will certainly look into it.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: On a point of information, Sir. It appears that the Ministers have delegated powers to their Parliamentary Secretaries. May we know whether any commitment made by the Parliamentary Secretaries would be binding on the Ministers?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Of course.

Mr. MONMOHAN DAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in this matter of recruitment, Communal Ratio Rules are applicable in the case of other communities?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: It is applicable in all cases.

Collective fines on the residents of Barakar in Burdwan district.

11. Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the amount of collective fines imposed on the residents of Barakar in Burdwan district;

(*b*) the extent of damage done to the said place during the last movement;

(*c*) the reasons for imposition of the fine; and

(*d*) the names of the persons from whom the said fine has been realised?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) Rs.5,000

(*b*) Kitchen sheds of the Relief Centre at Barakar were burnt.

(*c*) The reasons are given in paragraph 1 of the District Magistrate of Burdwan's order, a copy of which is laid on the Library Table.

(*d*) A list of assessees is laid on the Library Table.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why a definite answer has not been given to question (*b*), viz., the extent of damage done to the said place during the last movement?

(No answer.)

Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Sir, I want this question to be held over. I don't find the District Magistrate's order on the Library Table, a copy of which is said to have been laid there. Therefore I suggest that this question may be held over.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will enquire into it, and for the time being it may be held over.

(Accordingly Unstarred Question No. 11 was held over.)

Dacca Gymkhana Races.

12. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether Government servant either of the Dacca Collectorate or of the office of the Dacca Divisional Commissioner, is allowed to serve part time on the Dacca Gymkhana Races; and

(*ii*) whether the principle of not allowing Government servant to any other jobs other than Government jobs is followed by the police and Communications and Works Department of Dacca?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action he proposes to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) and (*b*) Government on the recommendation of the local officers at Dacca permitted certain Government servants to work in the Dacca Gymkhana Races. I do not propose to withdraw the permission granted so long as the local officers are satisfied that the work in their offices does not suffer.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who were the officers on whose recommendation Government permitted certain Government servants to work in the Dacca Gymkhana Races?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The District Magistrate.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is satisfied that the District Magistrate himself is not interested in any way in the Gymkhana Races?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The whole answer can be given in this way: When the District Magistrate found that the work of the Collectorate suffered and the clerks of the Collectorate were required for work there, they were withdrawn from the Gymkhana Races, and the clerks of the Collectorate are now no longer permitted to work in the Gymkhana Races.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: I want to know whether the District Magistrate is interested in any way in the Gymkhana Races?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I think not.

Sanitary condition of Goalundo subdivision in the district of Faridpur.

13. Maulvi AHMEDALI MRIDHA: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department aware—

(*i*) that in the subdivision of Goalundo in the district of Faridpur, the rivers Padma and Madhumati cover the east, north, west and major part of the south extremities of the subdivision;

(*ii*) that the rivers Chatra and Chandana flow through the heart of the subdivision;

(*iii*) that innumerable channels and water-courses take their courses from the above rivers and flow throughout the length and breadth of the subdivision;

(*iv*) that Bengal and Assam Railway main line, several lines for shifting of the Goalundo ghat, the Durgapur line, Dhawapara line, Pangsa ghat line, K. B. Railway line, the Faridpur branch line are the railway embankments existing in the subdivision;

(*v*) that almost the whole subdivision is encircled by the embankments;

(*vi*) that there are 19 railway stations in the subdivision;

(*vii*) that the railway lines have choked most of the water-courses and channels and the rest have been strangulated;

(*viii*) that in a year of normal flood water does not enter the countryside; and

(*ix*) that the whole subdivision is now full of stagnated areas full of weeds and shrubs and polluted water which is endangering public health?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ix*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps do the Government propose to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) (*i*) The river Padma covers the whole of the northern and eastern boundaries. The Madhumati covers the major portion of the western or rather south-western boundary. On the north-west and on the south the subdivision is bounded by the Kustia and the Sadar subdivisions.

(*ii*) The river Chandana passes through the heart of the subdivision while the Chatra which is small in length lies in the western part of the subdivision.

(*iii*) and (*iv*) Yes.

(*v*) The Bengal and Assam Railway line passes close to the northern boundary of the subdivision and forms one long embankment. The Kalukhali-Bhatiapara line passes along the central part of the subdivision and is more or less parallel to the river Chandana except at the southern part of the subdivision where it goes near the Madhumati river.

(*vi*) There are at present 16 railway stations within the subdivision.

(*vii*) The water-courses have been choked which may be due partly to railway embankments and partly to natural causes.

(*viii*) In years of normal flood water does not enter some portions of the subdivision.

(*ix*) The subdivision is dotted with stagnated areas full of weeds and shrubs which affect public health.

(*b*) The re-excavation of the Mrigichatra *khals* within the subdivision has already been undertaken, the contour survey of the area completed and the question of resuscitation of the Chandana and the Barasia rivers taken up.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in the subdivision of Goalundo there was an acute distress in 1938 and this year again there is a famine due to failure of crops and due to other causes?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: This is not the proper department concerned.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Is the Parliamentary Secretary prepared to take up this question with the Irrigation and Agriculture Departments of Government?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: That is, I think, a request for action.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state whether the Hon'ble Minister considers it desirable to take up this question in consultation with his colleagues in the Irrigation and Revenue Departments?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The question may be examined, but it is not the Local Self-Government Department which is primarily concerned with the question of famine.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state whether the Hon'ble Minister for whom he is answering this question will be prepared to take an initiative?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I cannot say off-hand.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state whether to give relief to the people who are suffering from stagnancy of water in that quarter, Government are preparing a scheme for resuscitating the river Chandana?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I want notice.

Further Supplementaries on Unstarred Question No. 12.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Before you declare, Sir, that the questions are over, may I crave your indulgence and that of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister to put one or two supplementary questions on question No. 12? My question is whether the Government servants who have been permitted to take up part-time work in the Dacca Gymkhana Races are receiving any remuneration or salary for the same in accordance with the provisions contained in the Fundamental Rules

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Yes, they draw some remuneration.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: From whom?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: From the Club.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Is it given under the Fundamental Rules?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No; it is given by special permission of Government.

Further Supplementaries on Unstarred Question No. 11.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: May, I, Sir, with your kind permission put a further supplementary question on Unstarred Question No. 11?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), namely, that the kitchen sheds of the Relief Centre at Barakar were burnt, to the question as to the extent of damage done to the said place during the last

movement, was not the fine of Rs. 5,000 excessive compared to the small damage done?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as I understand, this is again a thing that happened in the past, but I do not think that the fine had anything directly to do with the damage.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are prepared to give us the actual extent of damage? This is a matter which ought to be known, to Government, whether it concerned the past Ministry or the present?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has given some answer.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I ask for notice.

Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Now, the Hon'ble Minister wants notice. The question itself refers to the extent of damage and so notice is already there.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Actually the extent of damage is mentioned already in the answer.

Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN: Is that English?

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be English or Bengali or anything else. But that is the way the Hon'ble Minister has chosen to reply, and I have understood that that is his answer.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the amount of penalty, I mean Rs. 5,000, is much more than the value of the shed that was burnt there?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think the answer ought to be obvious to the honourable member.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what basis the Government is imposing the collective fine?

Mr. SPEAKER: That was imposed long ago.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what will be their policy with regard to this collective fine—whether they will support it or they will oppose it?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Is it a fact that out of Rs. 5,000 about Rs. 4,900 have been realised only from the Marwaris? Is there any reason behind it?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Notice is there; the list of the persons is also there. Is it not a fact that out of Rs. 5,000 about Rs. 4,900 have been realised from the Marwaris?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am not aware of it.

Ruling on the Point of Order raised by Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee on the 6th July, 1943, with regard to the admissibility of motions for Demands for Grants.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please. I have now got to give a decision on the point of order raised with regard to the demand for grant. The question for my decision is whether or not the motions for demands for grants as proposed to be made by the Government are in order. They have been attacked as out of order on the following grounds:—

(1) That the budget is one unitary document and cannot be dealt with piecemeal as proposed by the Government.

(2) That on the prorogation of the Assembly all previous proceedings relating to the budget lapsed automatically.

(3) That the Governor's proclamation under section 93 together with his authorisation of expenditure under paragraph 3 of the said proclamation have the effect of wiping out all previous proceedings of the Assembly relating to the budget held in February-April Session.

(4) That the motions themselves being for indefinite sums contravene the provisions of the law.

It appears to me that the law contemplates the annual financial statement to be one single complete document to be prepared by the Government, laid before the Assembly, discussed and voted upon by it and authenticated by the Governor. I further think that the law also contemplates that the whole procedure should be completed in one session of the Assembly within the time-limit to be fixed by the Governor in accordance with the rules framed by him under the proviso to section 84 of the Government of India Act, 1935. It is clear to me that the law is defective inasmuch as it has not provided for contingencies which could have been foreseen in view of the provisions of section 93 of the Government of India Act. It may be that the framers of the Act contemplated that even in cases where the Governor would assume responsibility for the administration in case of a breakdown of the constitution the expenditure incurred by him would have to be placed before the Assembly. It may be noted in this connection, as admitted by the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami, that it is the inherent right of this House to vote supplies and the absence of any provision in the Act making the expenditure incurred by the Governor during the section 93 administration even charged on the revenue is very significant. It is noteworthy that even charged expenditure is subject to discussion, though not to vote, of this House. This view, however, takes no notice of the fact that there may be cases where the operation of section 93 would last for a very long time covering a period of one financial year or over. It appears to have been accepted in some other provinces in India that the authorisation by the Governor for expenditure for the period during which section 93 would be in operation is not subject to

discussion or vote by the Assembly. Thus where section 93 has been in operation from before the financial year, the procedure followed in Orissa and Assam has been that only that part of the budget which was covered by the period after the revocation of the proclamation under section 93 was discussed and voted upon by the House. The rules regarding the time for presentation of the budget, etc., could not, for obvious reasons, be complied with. Section 78 of the Act does not prescribe any time when the financial statement is to be presented though Rule 12 of the Governor's Rules does. It is only reasonable to hold that in extraordinary circumstances not covered by the law it should be permissible to place the annual financial statement even after the year has commenced or proceeded further. I do not think there can be any serious objection to such a procedure. But the main question that arises for consideration by me on the present point of order is, not about the time when the budget should be presented, but the propriety or legality of dealing with the budget piecemeal in more than one session. There is no precedent for a case like this. It is contended by the Opposition that such a procedure is not permissible under the law. It is further contended that on the prorogation of the House all pending business of the session lapses except those which are specifically provided for. It is said that in the present case on the prorogation of the Assembly by His Excellency the Governor on the 24th April, 1943, all proceedings in that session relating to the budget lapsed so that a fresh budget for the whole year should have been presented and all formalities complied with afresh.

There is a good deal of force in this argument. Section 73 of the Government of India Act makes express provision for saving of Bills pending at the time of prorogation. There is no such provision with regard to matters relating to the budget. It has been stated that rule 19 of the Bengal Legislative Assembly Procedure Rules speaks of all pending notices and that in this case Government have given notice of demands which according to them lapsed. In other words, Government's contention is that the budget having been presented and discussed as provided for by the Act and the Rules, it has remained there unaffected in any way by the prorogation completed partly and unfinished partly and all that was necessary for the Government to do was to put in fresh notice for the demands which were not voted upon for the consideration of the House and nothing more was needed. Whereas it has been contended by the Opposition that all proceedings relating to the budget in the previous session were dead and gone immediately on the prorogation of the session. The presence of saving clauses in the Government of India Act relating to Bills and the absence of similar provisions relating to the budget in the Act or in the Rules coupled with the provision in the proviso (*b*) to section 84(*1*) of the Government of India Act and the Rules framed thereunder indicate to my mind that, far from contemplating that the budget could be dealt with piecemeal in different sessions, the law contemplates that the whole thing should be done in one session within the time-limit prescribed by the rules. That is why there appears to be a provision for what is called "guillotining". I doubt very much if the budget can be considered piecemeal in more than

one session. The provisions of section 78 to section 84 of the Government of India Act and Rules 12 to 15 of the Governor's Rules framed under the proviso to sub-section (*1*) of section 84 of the Government of India Act seem to indicate this. But it is not necessary for me to give any definite opinion about it in view of my opinion relating to the other grounds.

Assuming for the sake of argument that such a piecemeal treatment of the budget is permissible under the law there appears, in my opinion, another difficulty in the way of the Government. On the 31st of March, 1943, the Governor issued the proclamation under section 93 of the Government of India Act suspending the constitution. In exercise of the powers taken under paragraph 3 of the said proclamation the Governor on the same date authorised a budget which is exactly the same as the budget which was originally presented including that part which was actually voted upon and passed by the Legislature. It is clear, therefore, that even before the prorogation of the Assembly by the Governor the budget demands already assented to by the Assembly had been treated by him as not completed to be acted upon and in my opinion this was rightly done The Government's contention now is that on the revocation of the proclamation on the 24th of April, 1943, the Assembly was restored, in spite of the said authorisation for expenditure and the subsequent prorogation by the Governor, to the position in which it stood on the 29th of March, 1943. They, at the same time, maintain that the Assembly must not consider the expenditure incurred by the Governor between the 1st of April, 1943, and the 24th of April, 1943, even in respect of the demands for grants which were still pending for consideration of the Assembly on the 29th of March, 1943. This, to my mind, appears to be an untenable position. You cannot blow hot and cold at the same time. In one breath you say that in respect of the budget the Assembly has been restored to the position in which it stood on the 29th March, 1943, and in the same breath you say that the Assembly stands in the position where the Governor left it on the 24th April, 1943. Either of the positions may be tenable, but not both. If piecemeal treatment of the budget is permissible under the law, about which I have grave doubts, the Government must either place a new budget for the demands which they now propose to make for the period from the 25th April, 1943, to the 31st March, 1944, or they must totally ignore the authorisation of expenditure by the Governor under these heads during the period from the 1st April, 1943, to 24th April, 1943, and place the entire unfinished portion of the budget for the consideration and vote of the House. It is not for me now to advise the Government as to what they should do. But there appears to be no escape from this position.

In my opinion there is a good deal of force in the contention of the Opposition that the motions as intended to be moved are too indefinite and vague for consideration of the House. Government have not given any indication whatsoever as to the amount of expenditure between the 1st April, 1943, and the 24th April, 1943. They maintain that it is not possible to do so. I am sure it is not practicable to give the exact figures, but I have grave doubts whether or not an approximate amount can be

given. In fact, budget means estimates of probable receipts and expenditure. I think there are ways out of the difficulty, but when Government maintain that it is impossible, it is not for me to give them advice. In this connection it may be mentioned that approximate figures were supplied by the Assam and Orissa Governments when they presented the budget in the middle of the year on the revocation of the proclamation by the Governor.

The motions as they stand without the slightest indication as to the amount of expenditure incurred during the period between the 1st April, 1943, and the 24th April, 1943, are, I am afraid, inadmissible and not in order.

I think, therefore, that I have got no other alternative but to uphold the point of order raised, and I rule that the motions for demands for grants are out of order.

The House stands adjourned till 4-45 p.m. tomorrow.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: But, Sir, there is no business tomorrow.

Mr. SPEAKER: In that case my order of adjournment till tomorrow will stand cancelled.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: There is the Non-Agricultural Bill; it can be taken up tomorrow.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is why I adjourned the House till tomorrow. My first order regarding adjournment till tomorrow stands.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 5-52 p.m. till 4-45 p.m. on Thursday, the 8th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 8th July, 1943, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 187 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Small industries in Bengal and their difficulties.

***31. Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state whether he is aware of the difficulties and war-time problems which the large number of small and middle-sized industries are facing?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, Government propose to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE, LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja Shahabuddin): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Every effort has been and is being made by the Director of Industries in collaboration with appropriate authorities for removal of difficulties whenever these have been brought to his notice. A statement showing the action so far taken in individual cases is laid on the Library Table.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: On a perusal of the statement on the Library Table, I find that applications have been forwarded to certain officials. Is that all the action that has been taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Because we have received no further complaints from the persons we assume that necessary action has been taken on the applications forwarded.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware that due to war conditions the Department of Industries, Bengal, has taken a contract from the Government of India as regards some of the small industries like *sola* hat and other small industries, as a result of which small industrial people like the *sola* hat manufacturers have been much affected?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I submit, Sir, that this question does not arise.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the question?

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Sir, my question is whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware that the Department of Industries, Bengal, has taken a contract from the Government of India regarding *sola* hats and by that small industrial people like *sola* hat manufacturers have been much affected? The *sola* hat manufacture I cite as only an example. I want to know whether the Government of Bengal is aware that they have taken away from the hands of small industrial people many such home industries as a consequence thereof.

Mr. SPEAKER: The point is whether that supplementary question arises out of the present question.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Here the question is: "Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state whether he is aware of the difficulties and war-time problems which the large number of small and middle-sized industries are facing"? I say that small and middle-sized industries, as for example *sola* hat industry, hosiery industry and other such industries have been much affected by the activities of the Industries Department of the Government of Bengal due to the contract they have taken from the Government of India.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you want to know whether that is a fact or not?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The Industries Department have not taken any contract.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: I have not heard the Hon'ble Minister's reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: He denies it.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that small industries have stopped their work due to shortage of coal?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Yes.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what definite steps Government are taking to remove that difficulty?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Shortage of coal is a matter under the control of the Government of India, and whenever small industries approach the Director of Industries he takes necessary action to relieve them of their trouble.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government are taking any effective steps to remove transport difficulties?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: It is not possible for the Government of Bengal.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: In reply to a question of mine the Hon'ble Minister said that Government was not aware, may I know——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. He has definitely stated that the Industries Department have taken no contract.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Sir, I wish to ask a supplementary question whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware that Mr. S. C. Mitter, Director of Industries, Bengal, whether in his personal capacity or in his official capacity, has taken any contract from the Government of India regarding these things?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: As far as I am aware,—I am speaking offhand—the Director of Industries as such has not taken any contract but he as the agent of the Government of India is managing certain works for the Government of India.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Is it a fact that this taking of agency by one of the important officers of the Government of Bengal has affected to a great extent the small and middle-sized industries of Bengal and are the Government of Bengal prepared to take account of that?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I want notice.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the agency has been taken with the consent of the Government of Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Yes, Sir. The then Government did give their consent.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that before giving the agency the India Government made it a condition that the said Director of Industries will purchase the things required from the local small industries?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: I want notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the policy of the present Government?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, with regard to what?

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: With respect to his answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: He says that the consent was given by the previous Government. Out of that this question does not arise.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: I want to know whether the present Government approve of the consent given by the former Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise. You may ask whether the Government are considering the desirability of withdrawing their consent?

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: That is my view-point.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The present Government have not considered that matter yet.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the present Government admit that this action of Mr. S. C. Mitter is putting difficulties in the way of small industries?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not the action of Mr. Mitter. It is the action of the Government of Bengal.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state that the activities of the Director of Industries are only for war purposes and specially concerned with the making of camouflaged nets, hats for the army and now tents?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: These activities are in addition to his normal duties.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the agency was accepted by the Director of Industries?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: As far as I remember, during the regime of the last Ministry.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he or any of his friends has actually seen the magnificent hat factory started by the Director of Industries and satisfied himself personally or through his friends that the work is being done satisfactorily?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The adjective "magnificent" which my friend has used is his, but I have visited the factory

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is your opinion about it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Any question of opinion cannot arise

Compensation paid to the people affected by evacuation scheme in Feni subdivision.

***32. Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) how many villages have been evacuated within the Feni subdivision since April last;

(*ii*) what is the number of people rendered homeless as a result of evacuation;

(*iii*) what is the scale fixed by the Government regarding payment of compensation with respect to (1) homestead land, (2) gardens, and (3) culturable lands producing paddy and *rabi* crops; and

(*iv*) what was the value of the produce at the time when the scale was fixed?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date or time when the scale aforesaid was fixed?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that the value of the agricultural produce has increased more than double the value when the scale was fixed?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether on the basis of the present value of the agricultural produce compensation will be allowed to the owners or occupiers of lands whose lands have been or will be acquired at the present time for defence purposes?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the scale fixed for awarding compensation to the evacuees referred to in (*a*)(*iii*) for the districts of Chittagong, Tippera and Noakhali, separately?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*). It is not in the public interest to disclose such information.

(*iii*) Government have issued general instructions indicating how compensation is to be assessed and paid; but no scales as contemplated in the question have been fixed.

(*iv*), (*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

(*d*) Compensation for arable land is payable on the basis of the crop prices generally prevailing at the time of payment.

(*e*) The scales at which compensation is being paid for various items in the districts are not readily available.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what those general instructions are which have been issued?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Those instructions which have been issued were published in two Press Notes, dated the 27th July, 1942, and 6th August, 1942.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Does it not fix the amount of compensation to be paid per acre of land?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No, Sir, compensation is paid in each individual case on its own merits.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any instructions have been issued subsequent to the instructions that were already issued?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I am not aware.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the amount of compensation paid in 1943 is more than the amount paid as compensation in 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: As I have already stated, compensation and concessions are granted to each individual case on its own merits. So it is impossible for me to say definitely what is the amount of compensation.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the amount of compensation has increased in the case of individual persons?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Unless I am given specific cases I cannot say.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Datta, you must ask definitely which individual cases must be considered on merits. You may also ask what is the guiding principle in this matter of paying compensation and whether there has been any change in that principle.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of compensation that was paid for *aus* crop in the year 1942 and the amount of compensation that is to be granted for *aus* crop in the year 1943—whether the amount of compensation is increasing or decreasing?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It is difficult for me to answer offhand.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the price of paddy per maund in 1942 was much less than the price prevailing now in Feni?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I cannot say offhand.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: I refer to answer (*d*). In view of the fact that the owners of the property affected did not part with their properties out of their own accord but out of compulsion, will Government consider the desirability of making some such arrangement as these people may not lose the benefit of rise in prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: As I have already said, each case is considered on its own merit and each *bona fide* case of hardship will certainly receive Government's consideration.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: In view of the fact that the compensation that has been allowed in 1943 has not exceeded the compensation that was allowed in 1942, will Government consider the desirability of issuing instructions to the effect that compensation should be increased in view of the rise in prices?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: If any concrete case is brought to our notice, the question of increasing the compensation will certainly be considered in that case.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Does the Government consider the desirability of revising the amount of compensation?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think your question should be,—in view of the fact that there has been a rise in the prices of paddy, etc., and in view of the further fact that compensation is being given on the basis of prices prevailing in 1942, will the Government consider the desirability of issuing fresh instructions for increasing the amount of compensation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Sir, the answer is quite clear: the compensation for arable land is on the basis of crop prices generally prevailing at the time of payment.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he himself has seen the instructions issued by the previous Government to the District Magistrates of the evacuated areas?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any definite instruction issued to the District Magistrates for the payment of compensation per acre of land, per tree and per maund of crop?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I ask for notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to his answer (*c*), that the scales are not readily available, whether these scales will ever be available?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: The scales vary in different districts and it is not possible to collect them all at once. How is it possible for me therefore to place them here?

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the instructions issued regarding the nature and the amount of compensation to be paid in such cases are being followed by the officers who are entrusted with this work?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: The officers are expected to follow the instructions of Government but in case there be any objection to the course taken by any officer Government will certainly look into it as soon as it is brought to their notice.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Are there any petitions of appeal before Government against any order of compensation awarded by any officer concerned as is done in the case of ordinary land acquisition cases?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: So far as I am aware there are no such petitions before Government but in case any injustice is done in any case and the matter is brought to the notice of Government, Government will certainly see that proper compensation is paid.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the present District Magistrate of Chittagong has definitely stated that as an Imperial Officer he is not bound to obey the orders of the Ministry?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Not that I am aware of.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any complaint against such award of compensation has reached the Government up till this time?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Since I have taken over charge I have not received any such complaint. I want notice.

Exemption of landlords of cyclone-affected areas of Midnapore district from paying revenues.

***33. Mr. KRISHNA PRASAD MANDAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the Government contemplate to exempt the landlords of cyclone-affected areas of the Midnapore district from paying revenues for 1943 or to suspend the payment up to December, 1943; and

(*ii*) whether any representation has been received from any landlord on this matter through the district officials?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*)(*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of estates that are likely to be exempted?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) (*i*) The matter is under consideration of Government and orders will issue shortly.

(*ii*) A number of representations from the landlords have been received by the Collector, the Board of Revenue and Government.

(*b*) It is not possible to supply the information at present.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether anything relating to the remission of rents to the cultivators in the affected areas is under the consideration of Government?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise out of this question.

Appointment of Inspector of septic tank installation.

***34. Maulvi M. ABDUL KARIM:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) when the Septic Tank Inspector of the Government of Bengal reached his age-limit for retirement;

(*ii*) whether he has been granted an extension for another 6 months; and

(*iii*) whether any one has been appointed in his place temporarily?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad, Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department): (*a*) (*i*) On the 8th March, 1943.

(*ii*) No.

(*iii*) Yes. Dr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed has been appointed temporarily to the post.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the honourable member please state when the permanent vacancy will be declared to have fallen vacant and whether it is going to be filled up by a Muslim?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The post will fall vacant substantively with effect from the 9th July, 1943, and the officiating gentleman, Dr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, will be made permanent in the post.

Malaria in Boraigram thana, Rajshahi.

***35. Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health Department be pleased to state what is the position of the Rajshahi district in respect of death due to malaria?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware—

(*i*) that Boraigram thana of the Rajshahi district is being depopulated for malaria; and

(*ii*) that the supply of quinine and cinchona has fallen short?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) (*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, he proposes to take for eradication of malaria from the district, specially in Boraigram thana?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any scheme for production of the articles essentially necessary to combat malaria in the Province is under contemplation of the Government?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) The death rate from malaria was the highest in Rajshahi district during the quinquennium ending with 1941.

(*b*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) The supply of quinine to the Rajshahi district out of the annual Government grant for free distribution of quinine has been more liberal in 1942-43 than in the preceding two years. There may, however, be shortage of quinine in the market due to the War.

(*c*) The District Board was asked to prepare comprehensive anti-malaria schemes for the district and submit them to Government for consideration.

(*d*) There is no such scheme except that for cultivation of cinchona.

Teaching staff of Calcutta University.

***36. Dr. MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, department by department, the present number of—

(*i*) whole-time Professors and Lecturers,

(*ii*) part-time Lecturers,

in the University of Calcutta including Law College, and

(*iii*) Professors and Lecturers in the Department of Arabic, Persian and Urdu in—

(1) the grades of their services;

(2) the number of them that are Muslims; and

(3) the number of them that are Bengalees in the case of No. (iii)?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, Minister in charge of the Education Department): A statement is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to starred question No. 36.

	(1) Whole-time.	(2) Part-time.
English	7	7
Economics	8	7
Commerce	2	4
Philosophy	6	3
Pali	4	..
Pure Mathematics	8	2
Arabic	7	1
History	5	8
A. I. H. C.	8	1
Islamic Culture	3	3
Comparative Philology	2	..
Sanskrit	10	5
Modern Indian Language	8	6
Anthropology	7	1
Statistics	2	3
Applied Mathematics	4	4
Physics	8	1
Applied Physics	5	2
Chemistry	9	..
Applied Chemistry	5	2
Botany	5	1
Zoology	5	1
Psychology	6	2
Physiology	2	2
Geology	2	2
Teachers' Training	4	4
Teachers' Training	1	7
B. Com.	..	12
Language	..	4
Agriculture	3	..
Law	1	24
(3) Arabic and Persian	7	1
Urdu (included in the Modern Indian languages).	1	..

(*i*) Grades—

(1) Rs.600—50/2—1,000.
(1) Rs.200—25—500.
(1) Rs.200—20—500.
(1) Rs.200—20—500.
(1) Rs.225 }
(1) Rs.220 } outside grade.
(1) Rs.175 }
(1) Rs.200 (Urdu) outside grade.

(*ii*) All are Muslims.
(*iii*) Two are Bengalees.

Transfer of holding to non-agriculturists.

*37. **Maulvi A. M. ABDUL HAMID:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education (Registration) Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing separately—

(*i*) the number of transfer deeds registered in 1941, 1942 and 1943 up to 31st January;

(*ii*) the number of them that relates to occupancy holdings;

(*iii*) the number of occupancy holdings thus sold;

(*iv*) the total area of such holdings; and

(*v*) the amount received by the vendors?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that in 1942 and 1943, the transferees are non-agriculturists and transferers are agriculturists in most cases?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action Government contemplate to take in the matter?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) (*i*) to (*iii*) and (*v*) A statement furnishing the particulars is laid on the Table.

(*iv*) Figures not available.

(*b*) This department has no machinery to make an investigation about this.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Statement referred to in clause (a) (i) to (iii) and (v) of starred question No. 37.

Year.	Number of transfer deeds registered	Number of them that relate to occupancy holdings.	Number of occupancy holdings thus sold.	Amount received by the vendors.
				Rs.
1941	855,758	744,854	634,113	8,42,79,051
1942	964,596	849,636	762,346	10,19,09,026
1943 (up to 31st January, 1943)	134,245	123,379	110,990	1,61,01,531

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of the sudden increase in the number of transfers of occupancy holdings, will Government be pleased to state what action they propose to take to prevent the sudden influx of non-agriculturists in the agricultural areas as investors of war profits thereby ousting the real cultivators from their soil?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Sir, does this question arise?

Mr. SPEAKER: You may give some reply.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I explain? I am surprised that this question has been doubted——

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed it.

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: The figures show that there is some increase in the number of transfers. Now, the Registration Department has no connection with it and it does not know how to prevent transfer of lands.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: This is a question addressed to the Registration Department. Their duty is merely to register deeds. As to how transfers can be prevented is a matter for the Revenue Department and I submit that this question does not arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have addressed the question to the Government and the Minister concerned is present.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: The remedy is for the honourable member, if he has got figures, to put a fresh question to the Revenue Department saying that in view of the answer given by the Registration Department what action Government propose to take in regard to putting a stop to transfers from agriculturists to non-agriculturists. I submit that is the correct procedure.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, may I invite your attention to question (*b*)? Question (*b*) runs thus: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the fact that in 1942 and 1943, the transferees are non-agriculturists and transferers are agriculturists in most cases? There is a clear hint of this pernicious habit going on of transfers being made to non-agriculturists and the question has already been given notice of. The relevant department could take note of it from this question and get ready with the answer. Surely it is for the Government in the relevant department to try to find out what should be the proper remedy and it is not for us to wait and see and then finally wake up Government in their duties.

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, in this matter rule 30 is the relevant rule.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, that was superseded by you when you allowed questions to be answered by Parliamentary Secretaries and Parliamentary Secretaries were allowed to reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: The rules as they stand, I think, give some support to Sir Nazimuddin, viz., "A question addressed to a Minister must relate to the public affairs with which he is officially connected, or to a matter of administration for which he is responsibile". The wording is somewhat vague.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That is in a negative form.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. I for myself should like a speedy and proper disposal of things and I think it would have been better if it was permissible also to ask questions of Government as a whole. That would have solved this difficulty. Then the other question arises that in Bengal the Ministry may not always be jointly responsible. There is that difficulty also.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Before you give your ruling, Sir, I would invite your attention to the wording of the rule——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not giving my final ruling on this matter now. I am just finding this difficulty. So, for the present I will just ask you to be satisfied with the answer just given. I will personally look into this matter carefully and then give my definite decision as to how we should proceed in future.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In connection with the point of order raised by Sir Nazimuddin I would invite your attention to the same rule that you quoted. It reads in this form: A question——

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr. Sanyal, will you kindly have a talk with me in my Chamber?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: All right, Sir.

Receipts and expenditure in the Registration Department during 1941.

***38. Mr. KISHORIPATI ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the total receipts of the Registration Department in 1941, was Rs. 27,83,380 and the total expenditure was Rs.18,24,870 and the net income was Rs.11,75,007?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of reducing the registration copying fees now levied?

(*c*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) when the fee was last enhanced; and

(*ii*) to what extent?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) The total receipt was not Rs. 27,83,380, but Rs. 30,04,439. The figures of expenditure and the net income are correct.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) The rate is not unreasonable considering the expenses involved.

(*d*) (*i*) In the year 1928, by Government notification No. 904Regn., dated the 22nd September, 1928.

(*ii*) Registration copying fees under Article N of the Table of Fees increased from 4 annas to 8 annas and fees for granting certified copies from 1 anna and 2 annas to 2 annas and 4 annas, respectively.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state whether this Registration Department was created for the purpose of making any revenue out of it or simply to complete its work of receipt and expenditure?

Mr. SPEAKER: The question does not arise out of it. I do not allow this question.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Is the Parliamentary Secretary aware that this income of Rs. 11,75,007 was derived by extorting more work from the copyists and other members of the Registration Department by overtaxing them?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: There is no case like this as my friend alleges.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state in how many days the copies were returned previously and in how many days they are now being returned?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state what is the special expense incurred for copying for which he is of opinion that the rate is not unreasonable?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: This rate is fixed after due consideration of the cost of maintenance of records, preparation of copies, stationery articles and cost of staff supervision, etc.

Staff of the Registration Department.

***39. Mr. PUSPAJIT BARMA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of (1) Sub-Registrars and (2) clerks (muharrir); appointed in the Registration Department from the year 1937 to 1942; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are—(1) Muslims, (2) Scheduled Caste Hindus, and (3) Caste Hindus and other communities?

(*b*) Are Government considering the desirability of filling up the posts of clerks (muharrirs) in the Sub-Registry offices of the district by district people according to the Communal Ratio Rules?

(*c*) If so, what step do the Government contemplate taking in the matter?

Khan Sahib Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) This is being done.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Statement of information referred to in clause (a) of starred question No. 39.

APPOINTMENTS MADE IN THE REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT DURING 1937-42.

	Sub-Registrars.	Clerks and Muharrirs.
Muslims	62	188
Scheduled Castes	17	54
Caste Hindus and other communities	46	139
Total ..	125	381

Crimes committed in Munshiganj subdivision.

*40. **Mr. DHANANJOY ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, thana by thana, the number of—

(*i*) dacoities,

(*ii*) robbery, and

(*iii*) thefts,

committed in the year 1942 and up to 15th March, 1943, in Munshiganj subdivision of the Dacca district?

(*b*) Is it a fact that their number is on the increase?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken by the Government for their prevention?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The District Magistrate issued a circular letter to the Presidents of all Union Boards. Vigorous attempts were made to reorganise Village Defence Parties and encourage the public to take an active part in the protection of their own property Home Guards were organised in 13 Unions. Wherever possible Special Police Patrol Camps were established for more effective surveillance over bad characters. Special Police patrols were organised in criminal areas. A special staff was appointed to trace out absconders and untraced Criminal Tribes Act *dagis*. Special patrols were arranged on the rivers in an endeavour to prevent river dacoities.

Statement referred to in clause (a) of starred question No. 40.

1. Statement of dacoities, robberies and thefts (including burglaries), thana by thana, of Munshiganj subdivision, for the whole year 1942.

Thanas.	Dacoity. (*a*)	Robbery. (*b*)	Theft. (*c*)
Munshiganj	23	5	329
Tangibari	17	4	320
Sherajdikhan	12	6	317
Sreenagar	20	6	281
Lohajang	12	11	271
Dohar	2	..	81

2. Statement of dacoities, robberies, thefts (including burglaries), thana by thana, of Munshiganj subdivision from 1st January to the 15th March, 1943.

Thanas.	Dacoity. (*a*)	Robbery. (*b*)	Theft. (*c*)
Munshiganj	11	7	93
Tangibari	14	..	67
Sherajdikhan	15	4	88
Sreenagar	8	1	101
Lohaganj	17	8	64
Dohar	..	..	33

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*c*) which describes *in extenso* the action taken by the Government to tackle the situation, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what has been the result achieved so far?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, it is very difficult to say. As far as I know the general position of crime in Bengal at present is very bad. It has an upward tendency and we have not been able to bring it under control.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do I understand the Hon'ble Minister to say that in Dacca crimes are still on the increase?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as Dacca district is concerned, I have not got definite figures as to the position of crime. But from the reports that have been received I may say that not only in one district but throughout the province the figures are daily increasing rather than decreasing.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the main reasons according to him for such increase of crimes and what are the remedies he is thinking of?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I think it is very difficult to say that. The major number of crimes are largely looting of paddy and rice and of foodstuffs. I believe that though there may be many kinds of crime, namely, burglary, dacoity and theft, generally there are cases of looting of paddy and rice. This must be due to the present economic situation. It is curious that on the one side there is terrible want and at the same time there is no doubt that in the mufassal and rural areas there is a large amount of money going about. That also attracts the criminal section of the people. Then again the police have been so much engaged in other activities that they have not been able to maintain normal patrol as effectively as before. We will get more armed police shortly. As a matter of fact we got them in the last week of June and we hope they will be able now to increase the dacoity patrol more effectively than in the past.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many of these cases ended in conviction?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I cannot add anything more to what is stated in the reply. If the honourable member wants further information, I shall have to ask for notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that there is a confidential circular from the department to the mufassil police-stations that cases of theft and burglaries should not be taken into consideration?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I am not aware of any such confidential circular.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of giving arms to patrol parties and defence parties in villages in order to keep away the dacoits?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It will all depend on the patrol parties and defence parties. If there are really good and reliable men, I see no reason why arms will not be supplied provided they are available.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there have been many cases of theft in which at the time of trial the accused persons have pleaded guilty saying that they committed theft out of hunger? If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the policy of Government as to how they will deal with such cases?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I do not know of any such case where it has actually been so pleaded, but I can quite imagine that people have committed theft apparently on account of hunger and when arrested and brought before the court they may have pleaded guilty. I do not think it is in the interests of State to declare what the policy on such question will be, because if I say "yes", it will be a direct incitement to theft, burglary, dacoity and looting, but I am sure we can rely on the Magistrates that in reasonable cases they will exercise their discretion.

Dacoities in the district of Chittagong.

***41. Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, thana by thana, in the district of Chittagong—

(*i*) the number of dacoities committed during the period commencing from the 1st of January, 1943, up to the 12th March, 1943;

(*ii*) the number of prosecutions which ended in—

(1) conviction, and

(2) without conviction; and

(*iii*) the number of occurrences where no prosecution was started at all for—

(1) want of evidence, or

(2) any other reason?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether abnormal rise of prices is the cause of these dacoities?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Government are taking or propose to take to relieve the situation?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) The figures are given below—

(*i*) 19 dacoity cases—

(1) Hathazari P.S.	...	...	3
(2) Rouzan P.S.	...	...	1

(3) Fatikchari P.S.	... ...	1
(4) Patiya P.S.	.. .	1
(5) Boalkhali P.S.	... ...	2
(6) Anwara P.S.	.. ...	2
(7) Satkania P.S.	.. ...	3
(8) Rangunia P.S.	. ...	2
(9) Chakaria P.S.	. ...	2
(10) Banskhali P.S.	..	2

(*ii*) In 3 cases charge-sheet was submitted against 12 persons. The cases were *sub judice* when the last report was received

(*iii*) (1) In 4 cases F.R.T. was submitted

(2) In one case F.R.T. under sections 143 436 was submitted.

(*b*) Abnormal rise of prices is one of the causes

(*c*) I refer the honourable member to my colleague, the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. In answer (*c*) the Hon'ble Minister has referred the member to another Hon'ble Minister. May I have your ruling on this? Government may say "We take notice and shall submit an answer on a subsequent day from the department concened"

Mr. SPEAKER: Do you mean that it should have been treated as notice to the Hon'ble Minister?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, Sir

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Government can treat it as notice, and I shall issue instructions to the department concerned.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: With reference to answer (*b*) where it is stated that abnormal rise of prices is one of the causes, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain what are the other causes?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: In my opinion—I do not know whether many people will agree with me or not—one of the reasons is that at the present time there is a large amount of money in the mufassal, there is a class of people who are flourishing their wealth in the mufassal. There is, at the same time, a class of people who are dying. It is an extraordinarily anomalous position. I am sure that all those who come from the rural area, will agree with me that both these factors have something to do with the abnormal rise in crime

Activities of the Irrigation Department in the Rajshahi Division.

***42. Maolvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works (Irrigation) Department be pleased to state the activities of the department in the Rajshahi Division for the last two previous years and the current year up to 1st February, 1943?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he had any discussion regarding improvement of irrigation and communication in the Rajshahi Division with local officers and non-officials during his tours in the Rajshahi Division?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has any suggestions for improvement of irrigation facilities in the Rajshahi Division?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain, Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department): (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) As the Hon'ble Minister to whom the question was addressed is no longer in office, the question cannot be answered.

(*c*) Does not therefore arise.

Statement referred to in clause (a) of starred question No. 42.

Important protective works were taken up by this Branch at Kurigram and Rajshahi. At the former place spurs were erected in 1941 to arrest the erosion of the river bank by the Dharla. A few of them were washed away during the following flood, so additional spurs were erected. The total cost incurred is about Rs.14,000 besides maintenance charges to the value of Rs.5,300. The effect of these spurs has been found to be generally satisfactory.

At Rajshahi brick mattress encased in wire-netting was adopted for protection of Rajshahi town and completed at a cost of Rs.61,321. Extension and repairs of the existing mattress was also done at a cost of about Rs.45,000.

SURVEY AND INVESTIGATION.

The most preliminary work for preparation of comprehensive schemes is the contour survey. An estimate amounting to Rs.3,80,379 was sanctioned for contour survey in the districts of Malda, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, Rajshahi and Jalpaiguri. The work was taken up in 1940 but was stopped last year owing to the deputation of a large number of officers and trained subordinates of the department to the military and civil defence duty.

Investigations of several small schemes were also done during the last year

Collection of hydraulic data of all important rivers was being systematically made since the year 1936 but the activities of this branch have been rather restricted since the last year on account of the paucity of staff.

Besides the officers of this branch are frequently called upon to examine a very large number of cases of adequacy of waterways and to advise various authorities on the questions of drainage, irrigation and bank erosion. These take a considerable part of the time of the departmental officers.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government will consider the desirability of resuming the contour survey work in the near future in the Rajshahi Division?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: The work was taken up in the year 1940, but owing to the deputation of a large number of officers and trained subordinates of the department to the military and civil defence duty it could not be proceeded with. As soon as they are relieved of these duties and as soon as they join our department the work will be taken up.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of resuming the work in the near future?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Yes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Government be pleased to state what is the present position regarding the Kurigram embankment which has been referred to in the statement?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: There is no complaint from Kurigram.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My question is what is the present position regarding the proposal of having an embankment to protect Kurigram town?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: It is being done.

Dr. NALINANKSHA SANYAL: What is the present position?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: I can't say today's position. But the work has been taken up

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Hours of attendance of high officials.

14. Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the regular hours, if any, for the Divisional Commissioners and the District Magistrates to attend their respective offices while at headquarters; and

(*b*) the hours during which the Commissioner, Presidency Division, and District Magistrate, 24-Parganas, usually attend their respective offices?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: There are no rules prescribing for Divisional Commissioners and District Magistrates any regular hours of attendance at their offices. Each Divisional Commissioner or District Magistrate lays down his own hours according to the nature of his work. Usually for interviews and judicial work they have fixed hours.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the reply to question (*b*)? It has not been replied to.

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The notice is already there. I have nothing more to say. The Hon'ble Minister may revise the answer.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the District Magistrates are at all bound to come to office?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: They do come.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is their any obligation on their part to come to office at any part of the time?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: In most cases they hold their offices in their own bungalows.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Does the Hon'ble Minister say that they hold their office in their bungalows?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Yes.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: In view of the fact that great inconvenience is felt by the non-attendance of District Magistrates and Commissioners in their respective offices, will the Government think it desirable to fix certain hours for their attendance in their respective offices?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I shall look into the matter.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these officers can hold their offices in their residences?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: There is no bar.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that as a result of these officers holding their offices in their bungalows they have encouraged favouritism of particular persons who have easier access to their private residences than others who may be going there only on mere business?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I have no such information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the attention of Government was drawn to budget cut motions on the very item where specific cases were brought to the notice of Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I do not know.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether criticisms on the budget cut motions were taken note of——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. What is your question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My question was: whether Government is aware of the discussions on cut motions where specific cases had been brought to their notice?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has said that he is not aware.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My next question is this: Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of investigating into the action of all District Magistrates and Commissioners in this respect and issuing necessary circulars so that public functions may be discharged to the satisfaction of the public and as quickly as possible?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: If any complaint is received Government will certainly consider it and do the needful.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the last Ministry handed over the notes taken by them in the Budget Session?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise

Point of privilege.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: On a point of privilege, Sir. May I ask the Government through you, Sir, whether the proceedings and records of this House are kept in Government offices for the information of whoever may form the Ministry. (Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: বাংলায় বলুননা।) আসল কথা হোচ্চে এই যে, যে মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলই যখন আসুন না কেন—(As Mr. Roy began to speak in Bengali there were laughter and cries of "Ha! Ha!" by the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. যদি ইংরেজিতে ভালো কোরে না বোলতে পারেন তাহোলে বাংলাতেই বলুন না কেন। It has often appeared to me that proper debate cannot take place in this House simply because gentlemen who are not well conversant with English feel it beneath their dignity sometimes to speak in Bengali. I will encourage speaking in Bengali subject to the limit of work of Bengali shorthand reporters. That is the difficulty. Otherwise, I would have encouraged it much more; but I would like honourable gentlemen of the House to remember that it is not undignified on the part of anybody to speak in Bengali if he finds himself not quite competent to speak in English.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মাননীয় স্পীকার মহোদয়, আমার জানবার কথা হলো এই যে, যে সমস্ত ঘটনা এই এসেম্বি ভবনে ঘটে, সেগুলির সম্বন্ধে নোট বা রিপোর্ট গভর্ণমেণ্টের সেক্রেটারিয়েটের আফিসে আছে কিনা, এবং এই মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী হোন্ বা এর আগের মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী হোন্ যা কোরে গেছেন বা যাবেন, সে গুলির রেকর্ড সেক্রেটারিয়েটে থাকে কি না?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of privilege at all.

Suspension of realisation of revenues from tenants of inundated lands in the Sundarbans and Sagar Islands.

15. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that many lots in the Sundarbans and Sagar Islands in the district of 24-Parganas have been totally or partially washed away by the cyclonic flood on the 16th October, 1942?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the names of the lots;

(*ii*) the names of the owners of the lots;

(*iii*) the annual revenue of each of them;

(*iv*) names of the owners who have been defaulters in the January Kist; and

(*v*) whether any step has already been taken by the Government to suspend the realisation of the revenue?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the estates held under the direct management of the Government either in the Sundarbans or in the Sagar Islands have been washed away by the same flood?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of suspending the realisation of rents from the tenants of those estates?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be also pleased to state the total amount of damage of crops by the flood?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) to (*iv*) A statement containing the information is laid on the Library Table

(*v*) The Collector has been asked to submit proposals for remission or suspension of land revenue and cesses and pending the orders of Government on such proposals not to adopt any coercive measure for realising arrear revenue and cesses due from such estates.

(*c*) and (*d*) Yes.

(*e*) About Rs.83 lakhs.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA CHOSE: মাননীয় মন্ত্রীমহাশয় কি অনুগ্রহ কোরে জানাবেন—বি ৫নং এ তিনি যে বলেছেন, যে কালেক্টরদের তিনি যে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরেছেন—তাদের রিপোর্ট পেশ করবার জন্য, মন্ত্রীমহাশয় করে কালেক্টারদের সেই অনুরোধ জানিয়েছেন, এবং কালেক্টররা তাঁর সেই অনুরোধের আজ পর্যন্ত কোন উত্তর দিয়েছেন কিনা, এবং যদি দিয়ে থাকেন কোন তারিখে দিয়েছেন, এই দুটো বিষয়েরই তারিখ জানালে আমরা বাধিত হবো।

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: May I suggest that answers to Bengali questions should be given in Bengali

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that would be desirable.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, ওঁরা কি খালি কানে কানেই বোল্‌বেন ? আমরা কি কিছু ই শুন্‌তে পাবোনা ? এটা কি শুধু ঘরোয়া ব্যাপার ? ঘরোয়া ব্যাপার কোরে তুল্লে তো এখানে চল্‌বেনা ।

Damage in Schedule "D" Embankments in Contai and Tamluk subdivisions.

16. Mr. ISWAR CHANDRA MAL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the Schedule "D" embankments, commonly known as sea-dykes and river-dykes, in the subdivisions of Contai and Tamluk, district Midnapore, were breached by the tidal bores accompanying the cyclone on the 16th October, 1942; and

(*ii*) whether the drainage sluices on the embankments were damaged?

(*b*) If the answer to clause (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, subdivision by subdivision,—

(*i*) the number of breaches in each of such embankments;

(*ii*) the location of breaches with their dimensions having reference to settlement mauzas; and

(*iii*) the names of the drainage sluices with the extent of damages?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any estimate has been drawn up to close the breaches and to repair the sluices?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount to be required separately to close each of such breaches; and

(*ii*) the amount to be required separately to repair each of such damaged sluices?

(*e*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of taking up the repair work?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) Yes, some of the drainage sluices were damaged.

(*b*) (*i*) and (*ii*) A statement (Statement A) containing the information is laid on the Library Table.

(*iii*) A statement (Statement B) containing the information is laid on the Library Table.

(*c*) Rough estimates for closing the breaches and repairing the sluices have been prepared.

(*d*) (*i*) Separate estimates showing the amount required for closing each breach have not been prepared.

(*ii*) Separate estimates showing the amount required for repairing each sluice have not been prepared.

(*e*) Does not arise.

Retirement of Engineers in Public Health Departments.

17. Mr. ABDUR RASCHID MAHMUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) what are the due dates of retirement of the following officers in the Public Health, Bengal, Engineering Branch:—

(1) Chief Engineer,
(2) Executive Engineer, A.R.P. Division,
(3) Executive Engineer, Eastern Division,
(4) Executive Engineer, Western Division,
(5) Executive Engineer, Central Division;

(*ii*) whether it is a fact that Government contemplate to grant an extension to the Chief Engineer;

(*iii*) how many of the Engineers mentioned in (*i*) above are Muslims: and

(*iv*) whether the Executive Engineer, Central Division, has joined in another post keeping a lien?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iv*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of filling up the vacancy by a Muslim Engineer?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) (1) Mr. S. N. Ghosh is due to retire on the 16th October, 1943.

(2) Mr. S. C. Ghosh, is due to retire on the 17th June, 1943.

(3) Rai Bahadur S. N. Roy is due to retire in November, 1944.

(4) Mr. M. Hossain is due to retire on the 1st October, 1955.

(5) Mr. W. J. Berry is due to retire on the 31st March, 1947.

(*ii*) The question of extension of service is under the consideration of Government.

(*iii*) One Executive Engineer.

(*iv*) Yes.

(*b*) As the vacancy was for 3 months only, temporary departmental arrangements were made to carry on the duties.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the present policy of Government in the matter of granting extensions of service to superannuated officers?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: The policy of Government is not to give any extensions of service to superannuated officers generally.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Mr. S. C. Ghosh who was due to retire on the 17th June last has actually retired?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: He has actually retired and was reappointed on A. R. P. work from the date of his retirement till 31st August, 1943.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: But why was Mr. S. C. Ghosh re-appointed? Was it due to the dearth of suitable officers in the A. R. P. or for any other reason?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: It is for the purpose of carrying out the special duties that he has had to be reappointed.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain whether Government made any attempt to find out any other suitable man for appointment in place of Mr Ghosh?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: This appointment being for a short period Government did not make any attempt to find out another man.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: In view of the answer just now given by the Parliamentary Secretary that the policy of Government is not to give any extensions of service, will he be pleased to say why Government is still considering the question of granting extensions of service to some of the officers?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Only in special cases Government may consider the question of granting extensions of service.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in cases other than that of Mr S C Ghosh Government propose to reappoint the very same people or appoint others?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Mr. W J Berry is still in the service of the Government of Bengal or has been deputed elsewhere?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: He is now in the service of the Government of India

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Government be pleased to state whether any one has been appointed in his place; and, if so, whether that has been done by direct recruitment or by promotion?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: It has been done by promotion.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who is the person who has been promoted to this post?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Mr. A. K Banerjee.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to explain the reason why the Chief Engineer's case is being considered for extension and why the case of any other persons is not going to be considered for appointment?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I have nothing further to add to my answer.

Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Does the Government consider the desirability of stopping the grant of extensions of service?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Each case has to be decided on its own merits.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why in view of the paucity of Muslim officers, as is clear from the answer, the Government will not consider the desirability of appointing more Muslims in this department?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: When permanent vacancies will arise Government will certainly consider the desirability of appointing more Muslim officers.

Registration of Deeds in Tangail.

18. Mr. MIRZA ABDUL HAFIZ: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education (Registration) Department be pleased to state the number of registration of—

(*i*) sale deeds, and

(*ii*) mortgages,

of the landed property in the different Sub-Registry Offices at—

(1) Tangail,

(2) Kalihati,

(3) Ghatail,

(4) Madhupur, and

(5) Mirzapur,

in the subdivision of Tangail (Mymensingh) separately—

(*a*) for the month of—

(1) November of 1942,

(2) December of 1942,

(3) January of 1943,

(4) February of 1943,

(up to the date of taking the statistics);

(*b*) for the year of—

(*i*) 1941, and

(*ii*) 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: A statement furnishing the required particulars is laid on the Table.

Statement referred to in reply to unstarred question No. 18.

Period.	Sales.				
	Tangail.	Kalihati.	Ghatail.	Madhupur.	Mirzapur.
Registrations.					
November, 1942 ..	649	663	312	242	326
December, 1942	799	317	278	203	304
January, 1943 .	745	584	301	222	305
February, 1943	128	275	174	71	78
1941	3,042	2,757	1,427	978	1,386
1942 ..	4,778	3,690	1,899	1,182	1,936
Mortgages.					
November, 1942 .	132	.	.	23	75
December, 1942 .	134		.	11	71
January, 1943 .	141	1	1	19	42
February, 1943 .	18		.	15	11
1941	158	186	25	201	313
1942	451		54	281	518

Collection of education cess from the Faridpur district.

19. Babu NACENDRA NATH SEN: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the amount collected as education cess from the Faridpur district;

(*ii*) the total amount spent from education cess; and

(*iii*) the manner in which these amounts were spent?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government propose to extend the operation of the Education Act in any districts of Bengal other than those to which the Act has been brought into force?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of suspending the operation of this Act and of discontinuing the collection and levy of the education cess in view of the abnormal situation prevailing in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) and (*ii*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*iii*) The amounts were spent for the purposes mentioned in section 38 of the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930.

(*b*) Yes, that is the intention of Government.

(*c*) No.

Statement referred to in clause (a) of unstarred question No. 19.

Year.	Amount collected as education cess.	Total amount spent from education cess.
	Rs.	Rs.
1939	12,204	12,204
1940-41	66,790	66,790
1941-42	1,15,946	1,15,946
1942-43 (up to 31st January, 1943) ..	1,16,103	Not known.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the proportion of the collected amount to the education cess to be levied in the areas under review?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, the question was not directed to that at all, therefore I have not made enquiries in regard to that.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that there are some amounts in arrear?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I have already stated that I have not made enquiries, but apparently there must have been arrears.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state to which of the districts Government intends to extend the operation of the Education Act in the current year?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Government has no specific programme to extend the operation of this Act during the current year, but if cases come up each individual case will be considered on its own merit. I may also tell the honourable member that Government is not the only party that is concerned in this matter

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who will send up these cases to Government so that Government can take up the cases for bringing in those districts under the operation of the Primary Education Act?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The opinion of the district board counts in this matter. If the district board sends up a proposal, then that will be considered.

Appointment of Sub-Registrars from the Chittagong Division.

20. Mr. JAGAT CHANDRA MANDAL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the total number of Sub-Registrars appointed from the Chittagong Division from 1939 to 1942 August; and

(*ii*) the number of them that are—

(1) Muslims,

(2) Caste Hindus, and

(3) Scheduled Caste?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Communal Ratio Rules have been observed in respect of those appointments?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) 15

(*ii*)(1) 9.

(2) 5.

(3) One.

(*b*) The Communal Ratio Rules have been observed in respect of the total number of appointments in the Province.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Point of information.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Before we come to the next item of the agenda of today may I mention that I have been suffering from a difficulty—perhaps other members also How are we to address a Parliamentary Secretary in this House?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am thankful to you as I have myself felt the difficulty and this matter will be looked into and we may come to some decision shortly

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Thank you, Sir

Mr. I. D. JALAN: Mr Speaker, Sir, will you consider the desirability of the Hon'ble Ministers making a public statement delegating their powers of replying to the Parliamentary Secretaries so that in case later on it is considered necessary to say that it is an answer on behalf of Government there may be no difficulty?

Mr. SPEAKER: That also will be considered

GOVERNMENT BILL.

The Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, be taken into consideration

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: If the Nawab Saheb gives a speech there will be no opposition.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: My friends want to hear a speech. It is a subject which is absolutely non-controversial. This subject had come before this House several times and this is the third time that the House will have to give its sanction. The matter is a very simple one. Certain decrees have been passed for ejectment of non-agricultural tenants. Those decrees will remain in abeyance till a permanent legislation, more comprehensive, can be passed. In this case Goverment is taking time after time This is the third time that it has come to this House and I hope it will be the last time, and in the meantime a comprehensive legislation will come before the House for discussion and for passing.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: When will it come?

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: When it will come will depend upon you people as well as upon the Speaker. If the Speaker allows us to function, then in the course of one year I hope it will be passed.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Is there any apprehension that the Speaker will not allow them to function?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Mr Speaker, Sir, a permanent legislation ought to have been introduced long before and there should not be any further delay in introducing a permanent legislation. In view of the fact that the provisions of—

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr Datta, you can make all these remarks at the time of the third reading.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Very well, Sir.

The motion of the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain, Khan Bahadur, that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as passed by the Bengal Legislative Council, be taken into consideration, was then put and agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and the Preamble.

The question that clauses 1 and 2 and the Preamble stand part of the Bill, was then put and agreed to.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, I beg to move that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as settled in the Assembly, be passed.

Sir, I hope the honourable members will not oppose my motion.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that no time should be lost in introducing permanent legislation in the Assembly, especially in view of the fact that the provisions of this Bill have been rendered ineffective by the recent ruling of the Calcutta High Court reported in 47 Calcutta Weekly Notes that "suit" does not include "appeal". So appeals by landlords as well as by tenants are not being stayed. In the

Act itself only "suit" has been mentioned; "appeal" has not been mentioned. The result is very disastrous. Though in many cases it has been held by the Court that "suit" includes "appeal," but so far as the provisions of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill are concerned, as I have said already it has been held recently by the Calcutta High Court in 47 Calcutta Weekly Notes probably two weeks ago that "suit" does not include "appeal". So appeals both by landlords as well as by tenants are not being stayed. In view of this, no delay should be made in introducing permanent legislation and if permanent legislation cannot be introduced immediately there must be an amending bill to the effect that "suit" includes "appeal". Unless this is done, appeals will not be stayed.

With these remarks, I beg to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to this matter and suggest that there should be an amendment made to the Act and permanent legislation should be introduced without delay.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the last Cabinet in giving an extension to this Extending Bill, the then Hon'ble Mr. Banerjee promised that an Ordinance would be issued in order to protect appeal cases, but though an Ordinance was issued no protection was given to the appellants and appeals are now hanging like swords on the heads of the poor appellants. I know that the new Cabinet, of which the Hon'ble Nawab Saheb is a member, understands the position of appellants very well and hope that Nawab Saheb will try to see that an Ordinance or something like that is issued along with this extension. Otherwise it will cause great hardship.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, I cannot say anything about the future. But so far as permanent legislation of a comprehensive nature is concerned, we have already got a Bill prepared by the Ministry which left office in 1941 and if that Bill is accepted by the present Government it will be an easy affair for us to follow. This is my opinion.

The motion of the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain, Khan Bahadur, that the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943, as settled in the Assembly, be passed, was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 6 p.m. till 4-30 p.m., on Friday, the 9th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 9th July, 1943, at 4-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 18 Hon'ble Ministers and 196 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Enquiry into allegations made against Nazir of Jhenida Civil Court.

***43. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether there was a complaint to the District Judge of Jessore by the peons of the Jhenida Civil Court against the Nazir of the said court; and

(*ii*) whether an order of enquiry was made by the District Judge into the complaint?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) who held the enquiry,

(*ii*) whether at the time of enquiry the depositions made by peons were misrecorded; and

(*iii*) whether copies of depositions thus made were given to the complainant?

(*c*) If the answers to (*b*) (*ii*) and (*iii*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, he proposes to take against the officer holding the enquiry?

Maulvi SYED ABDUL MAJID (on behalf of the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain, Khan Bahadur, Minister in charge of the Judicial Department): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) The enquiry was held by the Munsif.

(*ii*) No.

(*iii*) A petition on behalf of the Process-servers' Association was filed on the 29th January, 1943, for copies of the depositions of the witnesses after only two witnesses were examined. The petition was rejected by the enquiring officer. The persons making the complaint were themselves deponents and their depositions were read over to them and admitted by them to have been correctly recorded.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Bye-election of Mymensingh District School Board held in Netrokona.

***44. Mr. ABUL HOSSAIN AHMAD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the District Magistrate of Mymensingh changed the time of recording of votes from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to 10 a.m. to 12 noon in connection with the District School Board bye-election held in Netrokona subdivision from the 26th to the 29th January, 1943, without any notification whatsoever or previous intimation to the candidates or voters concerned; and

(*ii*) that a large number of voters could not exercise their right of voting as a result?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) (*i*) No. But the polling enclosure was closed to fresh admissions at 12 noon.

(*ii*) Government have no information.

(*b*) It seems that the District Magistrate overlooked the recent amendment of the rule on the point and acted on a wrong interpretation of the old rules which were ambiguous. Government have accordingly set aside the election.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*) (*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why the polling enclosure was closed to fresh admissions at 12 noon when the time for polling was from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: In answer (*b*) that has been explained. It was a mistake on the part of the District Magistrate to have done so.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government called for any explanation from the District Magistrate for this misinterpretation of the rules?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: No because it was a *bona fide* mistake.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that this very question was answered in the last session also?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I am not aware.

Establishment of primary schools in Wakf Estates.

***45. Dr. SANAULLAH:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the Sub-Inspector of Schools in the Chittagong district asked the mutwallis of Wakf Estates to make a gift of the Wakf lands on which formerly a maktab, or a madrasah or some other educational institution existed in accordance with the provisions of the wakf deeds; and

(*ii*) that on enforcement of the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930, such institutions have been converted into free primary schools?

(*b*) Is it also a fact that the mutwallis have been advised to execute a deed of gift by giving a wrong survey number and an incorrect record of the plot?

(*c*) If the answers to (*a*) and (*b*) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) (*i*) No. The execution of a fresh deed of gift is not insisted upon for the establishment of a free primary school in a case where there is a provision in the Wakf deed itself for the establishment of a maktab or a madrasah.

(*ii*) In such case the institution is converted into a free primary school with the consent of the mutwalli concerned.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Excavation of Bhedra Bil in Nator subdivision.

***46. Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that the excavation of the Bhedra *bil* in Nator subdivision was undertaken by the Irrigation Department as a major irrigation scheme with Rajshahi District Board contribution of ⅓rd of the total cost of Rs.36,000;

(*ii*) that the Rajshahi District Board has already paid Rs 8,000; and

(*iii*) that the work was begun but left unfinished by the Irrigation Department?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for discontinuing the work?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount spent by Government for the work up to this day?

(*d*) When do the Government propose to finish the work?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) No They have paid Rs 7,000 so far.

(*iii*) Yes, except that the work of removal of bars from the bed of the river is in progress.

(*b*) The emergent condition created by the War on account of which labour could not be procured except at exorbitantly high rates necessitated the postponement of the work.

(*c*) Rs.13,383 up to the end of March, 1943.

(*d*) Steps are being taken, notwithstanding present adverse conditions, to resume the work after the rainy season.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government propose to take in this matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: Government is having the scheme re-examined and is trying to have it incorporated in the "Grow More Food" Campaign.

Flood in Nator subdivision in 1938.

***47. Kazi ABUL MASUD:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state what are the causes of the last flood of Nator subdivision in 1938?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps Government propose to take in the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: (*a*) The main cause was high flood in the Ganges and the Jamuna, which rivers rose to their highest level ever recorded, combined with a heavy precipitation of local rainfall. The following were contributory causes, *viz.*, natural rise of the spill area, deterioration of spill channels, cutting of river spill by embankments, and extensive deforestation in the catchment area.

(*b*) Affluxes in the openings in roads and railway embankments are being regularly observed since the flood of 1938. Remedial measures will be considered on the basis of data to be obtained by means of a contour survey proposed to be undertaken on the termination of the War.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give us some idea when the contour survey in Nator subdivision is expected to be taken up?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: The work was undertaken but was postponed sometime in 1942. I am, however, taking steps to have it resumed.

Removal of Chairmen of Faridpur and Bankura District Boards.

***48. Mr. M. FARHAD RAZA CHOWDHURY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that the Chairmen of Faridpur and Bankura District Boards have been removed;

(*ii*) that in the case of Bogra District Board an outsider not having requisite franchise qualifications was appointed as Chairman; and

(*iii*) that in doing so, a Government circular giving the said local body the power to elect its own Chairman had to be rescinded, withdrawn or cancelled?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the effect to the cancellation of the said Board?

(*c*) Is it a fact that Government are contemplating the supersession of the Mymensingh District Board?

(*d*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad, Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) A non-member of the Board was appointed as Chairman. The Bengal Local Self-Government Act does not prescribe any qualifications for appointment as Chairman.

(*iii*) The previous Government Order authorising the District Board to elect its Chairman was rescinded.

(*b*) The Board was deprived of the power to elect its own Chairman.

(*c*) and (*d*) The last Government asked the District Board to show cause why it should not be superseded on certain charges of incompetency and default in the performance of its duties.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to answer (*b*) whether the Government propose to give the Board who are deprived of the power to elect its own Chairman its normal power of electing its own Chairman now?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The matter is under consideration of Government.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to answer (*a*) (*ii*) whether there is any definite rule by which Government can appoint a man who is not a member of the Board as Chairman?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the rule or the section by which that can be done?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is in the Act itself.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Section 22.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the gentleman who was appointed as Chairman, District Board of Bankura, was not a voter at all?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I want notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the case of the last election of the District Board Chairman of Bankura the Sadar Subdivisional Officer took an active part?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Government has got no definite information.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government under the Act can appoint any man as the Chairman of a District Board?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Who is not even a voter?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*c*) and (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the grounds on which the District Board was asked by the last Government to show cause why it should not be superseded?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The member is referred to answer (*c*) and (*d*).

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether by appointing a non-member as Chairman the number has not been increased?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Does the Act allow it? How was it done?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: There is no bar under the Act.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state for what period of time can a non-member work as Chairman?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: In the present case the Chairman was appointed for only one year

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: My question has not been answered Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state for how long can a non-member act as Chairman of a District Board?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: That is a legal opinion I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*c*) and (*d*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any specific charges were brought against the District Board in addition to those mentioned in the answer?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I cannot say offhand. The charges were incompetency and default in the performance of duties

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Parliamentary Secretary be pleased to state whether the Government received any report from the District Magistrate on the explanation submitted by the District Board?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Abdul Karim, no doubt they are Parliamentary Secretaries but when they are answering questions they are answering them on behalf of the Ministers. The rule says, "...to whomsoever the power is delegated by the Minister is a Minister".

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Sir, I suggest that this confusion will be avoided if the expression "will the Government be pleased to state....." is used.

Mr. SPEAKER: That matter is under my consideration but for the present, as I see the rules, when a question is asked it would be better to ask, "will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state.....", even if the Parliamentary Secretary answers the question.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: All right, Sir.

Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has received any report from the District Magistrate on the explanation submitted by the District Board?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes.

Mr. ABDUL KARIM: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the date of the letter of the District Magistrate containing the report?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Some time in the month of January.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government is aware of any statement made by the ex-Chairman of the District Board of Bankura?

Mr. SPEAKER: Where?

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: In the papers.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not allow the question.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the term of office of the present Chairman of the Bogra District Board will expire?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: 20th or 22nd of July.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: In view of the answer just now given that the term of office of the Chairman will expire on the 22nd of July, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government propose to have an election after the expiry of his office?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: It is under the consideration of Government.

Report of the Committee on Public Accounts.

*49. **Babu NAGENDRA NATH SEN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) what action and decision, if any, has been taken on the Report of the Committee on Public Accounts, dated the 20th November, 1942, and especially with reference to (B), item No. 3, paragraph 8(B), item No. 3—at page 2 of the Report and page 4, Proceedings of the first meeting, dated the 10th November, 1942;

(*b*) what action has been taken against officers whose neglect of duty and absence of supervision led to the loss of Rs.9,23,196;

(*c*) whether Government have accepted the advice of the Committee that lump provisions should not be included in the Budget for schemes, the details of which have not been settled (p. 3, p. II, P. 5, para. 8);

(*d*) what are the reasons for the failure to utilise Rs.1,15,000 out of a grant of Rs.2,85,000 for Scheduled Caste education; what has been done with the unspent balance (p. 7);

(*e*) what are the reasons for failure to utilise nearly Rs.2 lakhs out of the discretionary grants by District Officer for rural reconstruction work. What has been done with the unspent balance (p. 8)?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami): (*a*) and (*b*) A report will be laid in due course before the Public Accounts Committee at its next meeting.

(*c*) Yes. This advice is in consonance with Government's own policy.

(*d*) and (*e*) Do not concern this department.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Appointments of House Surgeons.

21. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether interview was granted to a number of candidates to fill up five posts of House Surgeon (indoor) in the Medical College, Calcutta, on the 2nd February, 1943; and

(*ii*) whether these posts have been filled up?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the number of posts filled by—

(1) Hindus, and

(2) Muslims?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (1) 5.

(2) Nil.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the name of the appointing authority and the procedure followed by him in the matter of appointments?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The Principal of the Medical College.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how the appointments were made?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Applications were invited and the Principal made selection of the candidates.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many Muslim candidates were interviewed by the appointing authority?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why not a single Muslim was appointed to any of these posts while five Hindus were appointed?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: In the opinion of the appointing authority no suitable Muslim candidate was available.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many Muslims applied for these posts and what were their qualifications?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: All were M. B.'s, but I cannot say their exact number.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the five Hindus who have been appointed are M.B.'s, D.P.H.'s or anything else?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: They are also M B.'s.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Then, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the reasons for not appointing Muslims on the ground that no suitable Muslim candidate was available?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: The appointments were made by the previous Government. I can assure the honourable member that everything will be scrutinised by the present Government when such an occasion arises.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Communal Ratio Rules were applied in the case of these appointments?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: No.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why the Communal Ratio Rules were not applied in these cases?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: These were honorary appointments when they were made.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any allowance attached to these appointments?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: When these appointments are first made they are honorary, but after some time the deserving persons are given some honorarium.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether these persons have been appointed under the Emergency Scheme?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I want notice.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Will Government consider the desirability of undoing the injustice done to the Muslims in this case?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN KHAN: Certainly this Government will look into the matter.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that all the candidates who were interviewed were Hindus?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: I am not aware of the fact.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pelased to consider the desirability of enquiring into the matter?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, Sir.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JASIMUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Communal Ratio Rules will be applied when these honorary officers will be absorbed in stipendiary posts?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, Communal Ratio Rules will apply.

Excavation of Salikha (Narad) near Nator town.

22. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department be pleased to state whether an irrigation scheme for excavation of Salikha (Narad) near about Nator town was started by the Government some 2 years back?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the work has not yet been completed?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for the delay in the completion of the work?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: (*a*) The work was undertaken in January, 1941.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The slow progress of the scheme is due to the emergent condition created by the War, on account of which labour could not be procured except at exorbitantly high rates.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government will consider the desirability of completing the scheme by the end of the financial year?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: If it is possible, yes.

Election of President of Mymensingh District School Board.

23. Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether any legal opinion was taken before giving their decision on the petition for setting aside the election of President of the District School Board, Mymensingh?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government have fixed any date for the election of the President of the District School Board, Mymensingh, after their decision on the election petition?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Government have issued orders for the election of the President of the Mymensingh District School Board in accordance with the revised rules which provide that the District Magistrate shall hold the election as soon as possible after the receipt of the direction of the Provincial Government.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the designation of the law officer of Government whose legal opinion was taken on this subject?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: All this was done during the previous regime. I do not know the name of the officer whose opinion was taken, and for that I want notice.

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions over.

Pending questions.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, before you take up the regular business of the day may I bring to your notice that there are a large number of questions lying unanswered from the last session? I have got at least four questions which have not yet been answered. May we know, Sir, if these questions will be answered during this session?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I see from my office report that there are a large number of questions pending. I will look into the matter and take necessary steps.

Non-official Resolutions.

Mrs. NELLIE SEN GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the resolution which stands in my name, viz., that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Bengal should take immediate steps to—

(*a*) set at liberty all persons detained in prison or restrained under rule 129 or rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules or under Regulation III of 1818 for their political views or activities;

(*b*) release all persons convicted for offences connected with the movement following the arrests of Congress leaders in August, 1942;

(*c*) appoint a tribunal consisting of at least two persons of the position of High Court Judges to review all cases of political security prisoners and convicts after giving full opportunity to the persons concerned to meet the charges agaist them, if any, in case Government fails to release the persons immediately; and

(*d*) appoint a non-official committee composed of all parties in both the Houses of Legislature to advise Government on the amenities and treatment provided for in the jails and detention camps for different classes of political prisoners and detenus.

Sir, eleven years ago and many years before that I used to hear my husband appeal and urge the release of political prisoners. Since then I have heard many people doing the same thing. I myself have tried my best to do something, but it seems to me that Government have become just like those people who live constantly by the side of a disturbing noise. If you ask them after a time "does not this noise disturb you", they say "Oh, no, we do not even notice it" and it seems to me that it is just what has happened with the Government. Do Government never think that these young men should have a chance to live a normal life? Do they never think that these young men want to live with their wives, children and parents? Governmets come and Governments go, but our political prisoners are with us here at all times. I am not going to plead or urge or appeal for the release of these prisoners. I know it is useless, but I am going to say that you must release these people. How long can you go on keeping them like this? The High Court has given a judgment that the retention of these boys under rule 26 is illegal, but has it made any difference? The judgment has given them freedom, but what has happened? Before they can even breathe the fresh air of freedom, they are rearrested and taken back to jail. I know you will say that these young men are a great danger in times of war, but may I remind you that hundreds of these young men were in jail long before the war commenced. War, it seems, is for freedom for all nations, but the Indian political prisoners come under a new category. They are not supposed to want freedom. Supposing I say if these young men are guilty and if there is a strong case against them, give them a trial, bring them out and give them a trial, but do not keep them locked in jail. Give them a chance of showing what is right and what is wrong. You have kept them without trial. Is it because you feel that if they are put to trial, you will be the guilty people and they will be proved to be innocent people? As I have said, I will not plead, I will not urge. I know how useless it is, but I will say "You must release these boys, you must give them a chance of showing what they can do".

I want to speak also about overcrowding in jails. You arrest these young men in numbers. You do not know whether there is room for them or not. You do not know whether they can be treated decently or not. They are not criminals, they are political prisoners. If there is sickness and there is—not slight but very serious illness—there is no proper medical attention, there is no proper medicine for them. There is no proper food for

even those who are there. You have raised the allowance to Rs. 1-8. What a great thing it is! It costs them more than Rs. 1-8 to live now. One can hardly exist on Rs. 1-8. We ourselves know that this is quite true.

In Dacca a young man died the other day. He was released when it was too late to save him. His old father went to Dacca to take him home, but he was too weak to be taken and his father had not enough money to take him home and feed him. You may say that he might have been better off in jail. But I say, no, that poor man had no money not because he had one son in jail or two sons in jail but he had three sons in jail and before even a small amount could be given to him as financial help, his son had died and his brother returned the money to me saying that it was too late.

Then, Sir, I want to speak about the matter of interview. To get an interview with a political prisoner—unless one is a person who can kick up a row, I put it in that way—is extremely difficult and people have to wait and wait before they can see their friends and relations.

Then, again, there is the matter of delay for prisoners who sometimes wish to see their dying relations and who want leave on parole. The very nature of that request shows that the matter should be expedited. But what happens? Sir Nazimuddin told us the other day that questions and enquiries took such a long time and the man died and so no one bothered even to send a reply to the man. I do beg of you if you do not release these men, at least treat them as ordinary human beings.

Then, last but not least, there is the matter of internees. You must admit that an internee is a man who is not imprisoned for what he has done but he is a man who is interned for what he might do. I will give you the case of a man in Chittagong. That man was a homeopathic doctor. He was, it is admitted, earning Rs. 150 a month and a man with Rs. 150 a month could educate, clothe and feed his children fairly respectably in those days. We all know that if a man has an income of Rs. 150, he is often expected to help his relations. This man also was not unusual. He was supporting his family and he was also educating his nephew. In October, 1942, he was suddenly interned. I tried, he tried and others have tried to get an allowance for that man. Five months later in the month of February, 1943, he has been allowed the handsome sum of Rs. 15 for 7 people. We thought it was a mistake and the wife at first refused it. But hunger is a hard master and she had no other alternative but to accept that fifteen rupees. I may tell you this also that the money was not granted from the day of his internment but 5 months later. So, for five months nobody cared how he lived. The allowance is not even one-tenth of his income.

I have another letter here from another medical practitioner. He worked in the Ramkrishna Mission. He writes to me—unknown to me and unknown to the public—"I have been issued with an order of restraint which means that although I had a former appointment, I cannot work there as I cannot move from my house to my pharmacy". I beg of you to have an enquiry made as to why I have been treated in this way and how am I to meet the expenses?

Then, Sir, I want to go into the matter of allowance. This is a disgraceful matter. For months and months, weekly and even daily I have been receiving letters from people begging me to do something in the matter of allowance. So far it seems to me that no allowances are being granted and when there are one or two cases, the amount granted is between Rs. 10 and Rs. 15. How is it possible for these people today to meet their expenses with this small amount? Everyone knows that I am particularly interested in Chittagong naturally, but I have received letters also from Rajshahi and other parts of Bengal and all of them beg of me to do something for their families and to see that they may have some allowances. I have seen the authorities and everywhere I am treated with the utmost courtesy, but that does not feed wives and children of those political prisoners.

I think this is all that I have to say. But before resuming my seat, I again say that you must release these young men, give them a chance and see what they are going to do. How can their release endanger the country? You have kept them locked up for years. Give them a chance. What is their sin, I ask? Their sin is that they want freedom for their country, freedom for themselves and freedom for their children. (Applause from the Opposition Benches.)

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, we have seen that resolutions are tabled and moved in this house. We have also seen that resolutions, even if passed, do not produce any result, but this time I rise with great hope and expectation because the Hon'ble Chief Minister, just on the eve of his formation of the Ministry, made a brilliant statement which we read from inside the jail that they were going to release the political prisoners. This resolution is nothing but the expression of the desire of the Hon'ble Chief Minister which he declared in a statement before the formation of the Ministry. There is an amendment moved by my friend——

Mr. SPEAKER: It has not yet been moved.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: It may be moved, Sir. In anticipation of this amendment——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Kundu, if there is any difficulty, technical or otherwise, because it has not yet been moved, you may refer to the contents and go on speaking in that way.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: I do not know whether the amendment will be moved or not. The amendment——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Kundu, please resume your seat. I will allow you to speak afterwards. Mr. Siddiqi.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, he will be in the Assembly in five minutes.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, to help the House and to assist you in this connection, may I rise on a point of order?

Mr. SPEAKER: Point of order has not yet arisen.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: As you have already been pleased to enquire when Mr. Siddiqi is going to move——

Mr. SPEAKER: I must frankly confess that I am to a certain extent guilty in this matter. Mr. Siddiqi came to me and told me that he would like to speak after another speaker has spoken. That is why I called upon Mr. Kundu. That is my own fault (cries of "No," "No"). Mr. Siddiqi is not here. So it will be improper that in his absence in the House you, Dr. Sanyal, or anybody should speak.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In the amendment——

Mr. SPEAKER: You may refer to it in an indirect way.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In the proposed amendment it has been admitted that the release of political prisoners is a matter which has attracted the attention of an individual Government member, but the difference with us is that Government want to release the prisoners by reviewing individual cases, whereas we press for wholesale release. Sir, I was in jail for ten months. I say that at least 90 per cent. if not more, of the prisoners are detained for nothing and that Government are spending lot of money for their detention. My case will be that when the Chief Minister—when he was not a Minister—held out a promise to release prisoners, the release of prisoners should go on as a policy of release and not by driblets by scrutiny of individual cases, because even if there were reasons for their detention, their detention was at a time when the circumstances were different from the circumstances that are existing now. If these prisoners are released I strongly believe that there will be no movement, especially when a man like Mr. Rajagopalachariar who has some influence over the country is arranging for a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee for revising the resolution of the Congress. I do not know whether the Congress will accept his view, but it may be told safely that even if these prisoners are released there is no danger of any subversive movements in view of the fact that economic conditions are very very bad and unfavourable for any movement. On the contrary if these political prisoners are released wholesale there will be a change in the political atmosphere in the country and I believe stiff problems like the food problem will even be solved, because these people who are in jail now are very popular figures in the country. If they go out, if they go to their people and try their level best, they may help in somewhat solving this problem. So my point is: release the political prisoners, release them immediately, release them not by driblets and not after the scrutiny of individual cases but wholesale. What are these records, on which detentions have been based. The records are *ex-parte* records without any legal proof. Something has been written against them and these records have been taken to be true and they have been imprisoned without trial. So it would not help us in any way if they wish to release these prisoners by looking into the records.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will you give us your experience?

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: I shall give my experience. The resolution has two parts: one relates to the release of political prisoners and the other refers to the amenities of political prisoners. A committee has been suggested to be formed for looking into these matters. I want to place some of the facts before the House because if I am to go into all of them I would require much time. The first thing I want to say is about the writing and receiving of letters by the prisoners. The letters which are written by prisoners and the letters which are written to prisoners are delayed in censoring. I have at my disposal at least 50 letters and I can show that in at least a dozen cases a delay of 91 days, 76 days, and 74 days has occurred in the process of censoring. But when we looked into the letters actually nothing was censored. A letter was sent and it was delayed in the censor office for 91 days. Even in these difficult war times if a letter was dispatched from Calcutta to London it would reach there earlier than 91 days. This privilege of writing and receiving letters has become a farce. The purpose of writing letters gets clearly frustrated.

As regards interviews, we find that months are taken by the Special Branch and the Intelligence Branch in granting the first interview.

Regarding medical cases, I may inform the House that they are absolutely neglected. I will only relate 3 cases of security prisoners. One case is that of Sri Aswini Kumar Gupta. He went to jail in perfectly sound health. He began to suffer from low fever. He was taken to the Medical Officer of the Jail and examined with a view, if necessary, to send him to the Medical College for examination by a specialist. Nobody cared to see what the trouble was with him. After 2 or 3 months' intense suffering, he was taken to the Medical College and the specialist there declared it to be a case of T. B. He is now undergoing treatment in the Jadavpur T. B. Hospital. I do not know whether he will be cured or not.

Even now, there is one case in the Presidency Jail. His name is Sri Bimal Nag and there is another whose name is Sri Nitai Jana. They have been getting low fever for the last two months in the jail. They are now in the jail hospital. As long as I was there, they were not sent to the Medical College for examination by a specialist. In this way, cases which could have been cured, if taken care of at the early stage, are neglected, and they are sure to die without being cared for.

There was one Sri Amar Mukherji who was suffering from chronic asthma. Since his detention he was always in the jail hospital. After about 7 or 8 months, he was sent to the Medical College. This is how the affairs in the jail hospital are going on.

Then there is the arrangement for furnishing us with clothing and other equipments. I was there for about ten months. Yearly dues of clothings, etc., are given in two instalments. For a long time, till the expiry of six months, in spite of my repeated requests, they did not give them to me. There are many more in the Presidency Jail who are being treated in the same way. The rules which are there specifically mentioned in the Bengal Security Prisoners Rules are more observed in their breaches. There is no regular arrangement, there is no regular system. The irregularity and

want of system are the fashion in at least the Presidency Jail. In small matters the jail staff will conduct themselves in a manner which is very provoking. We once thought of approaching the authorities with a view to enabling us to have our night meal outside the dormitory, because there was no room for taking our meal inside the dormitory. The lock-up hour was 8 p.m. We were moving the higher authorities for the extension of time. There was correspondence passing between us and the Inspector-General of Prisons. We suggested that though the lock-up hour was 8 p.m. till it was extended they might allow us to finish our night meal before 8 p.m. in the dining hall outside the dormitory. There could not be any objection to that suggestion being accepted. What happened was this. On the 24th or 25th March when the security prisoners sat to take their night meal in the dining hall outside the dormitory, the Additional Jailor came with warders and asked us to get up when we had not finished our meal. We pointed out to him that it was not even lock-up hour and told him that we were not going to delay the lock-up hour. But he withdrew those ordinary prisoners who were then serving our meals. This is how the jail staff treat the political prisoners in a very objectionable manner. It may be that these prisoners were there for preventing them from committing a prejudicial act, but it was never meant by the Government to insult them, to drag them away from their half-finished meal. Though it was never the intention of Government, yet it is done in jail.

Now, Sir, I must tell the House that there is again no arrangement for regular visits either by officials or non-officials. Though I was in the jail for about 10 months the Chief Presidency Magistrate visited the jail only once. There is a provision in the Bengal Security Prisoners' Rules that the Chief Presidency Magistrate is an official visitor and will visit the jail every quarter. But he does not do so. During the period of 10 months when I was there only two visitors, viz., Mr. Mallik and Mr. Abdur Rahim visited the jail each only once. There is no arrangement for checking the high-handedness and the vagaries of the jail staff. The Superintendent is an old man, has no ability to inspect or supervise the jail staff. He is old enough to retire. He is also not adequately qualified to hold such a responsible position. I do not know how he is there even up till now. I forgot to mention one thing and this is regarding the writing of letters. As I have been able to see the rules regarding writing of letters, I am positive that the rules provide that the security prisoner is entitled to write on two sides of two sheets of letter papers but when he writes on two sides it is always invariably withheld either by the jail authorities or censoring authorities. I do not know under what authority and under what rules they withhold these letters. Now, Sir, these grievances were accumulating and there was the most dastardly assault on us on the 25th April. I was present there all along and we informed the authorities at once by telegraphic message about the incident. I am sorry that even when we sent telegrams to the Inspector-General of Prisons and to the Chief Minister, the Inspector-General of Prisons did not care to pay any visit to the jail. I must tell the House that we also lodged a formal complaint before the Chief Presidency Magistrate which, however, has been pending without any orders being

passed. He has not passed any order whatsoever. Now, after coming out when I met the Hon'ble the Chief Minister he directed the Chief Presidency Magistrate to proceed according to law. I do not know if I am entitled to speak about the details of the case but I must tell the House that this was a very serious case and the jail authorities, in my opinion, were responsible for the assault.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi.

Point of order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. I presume Mr. Siddiqi, as he was going to look into certain papers, was trying to move an amendment which has been circulated and placed before the House. It is supposed to be an amendment to the resolution of Mrs. Sen Gupta——

Mr. SPEAKER: You are raising a point of order on the proposed amendment?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, and before Mr. Siddiqi is called upon to move the amendment I would like to have your ruling, Sir, on the admissibility of this amendment as an amendment at all and I would base my argument on two grounds

First of all, Sir, this is a substitution of a motion and an amendment cannot be accepted which seeks to substitute the entire resolution in a new form. An amendment can at most modify certain portion or portions of the resolution moved And even if a very substantial part could have been kept out and a substitution inserted in its place there must be some portion of the original resolution left behind. Sir, the present resolution or the proposed amendment of Mr. Siddiqi does not retain any part of Mrs. Sen Gupta's resolution and therefore it is out of order.

Secondly, Sir, we find that this proposed amendment is in the form of recording an appreciation of the activities of the present Ministry whereas the rules of the Assembly justly state that a resolution of this House or an amendment thereto should be in the form of a declaration of opinion and we always have resolutions to the effect that "this Assembly is of opinion, etc."! The "form" in which resolutions are required to be drafted is also indicated by the Hon'ble the Speaker by virtue of the power given to him under the rules and this is also indicative of the form that should be followed.

On these two grounds, Sir, I submit that this resolution cannot be accepted as an amendment to Mrs Sen Gupta's resolution. If such amendments were permitted there would be no meaning in giving previous notice of 21 days in respect of a resolution to be moved in the House. We can then bring in anything and everything by way of so-called amendments to resolutions that have got priority, in the House, of discussion, and thus nullify the right of priority by bringing in anything and everything we like by way of amendment.

Apart from these grounds there is another reason for my objection, namely, that this motion goes even beyond the subject-matter contemplated by Mrs. Sen Gupta in her resolution. This proposed amendment is really in the nature of a confidence motion in the Government and if it is a case of moving a confidence motion by the majority party they can, if they like, come forward with an appropriate motion at any stage. So far as our motion is concerned we have given certain specific items regarding the release of prisoners, and amenities to be given to them. But the scope of this amendment to the main resolution goes very much beyond that.

On these three grounds, Sir, I submit that this so-called amendment be declared out of order.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, I would like to say a few words in support of Dr. Sanyal's point of order.

Mr. M. A. H. ISPAHANI: Sir, when this amendment has received your consent, are honourable members in order to raise point of order and have a full-fledged debate on the admissibility of this amendments?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Ispahani, I called Mr. Siddiqi to move this amendment and that was why he stood up to speak. Subsequently, even knowing that full well, I have allowed this point of order. What is the use, therefore, of your raising a techinical objection?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: On a point of order, Sir. Let Mr. Siddiqi first place his motion before the House and then the question of its admissibility or otherwise will arise.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: We cannot allow this amendment even to find a place in the record of the proceedings of this House: that is my point of order.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir,——

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Are you, Mr. Speaker, allowing a speech on this point of order?

Mr. SPEAKER: If he wants to say a few words on the point of order he may do so.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, this proposed amendment is not really an amendment as has been submitted by my friend but a mere substitution of an independent resolution in place of the original. Sir, the Assembly Procedure Rules do not give any scope to substitute one resolution in place of another. I beg to draw your attention to rule 91 of the Assembly Procedure Rules which says "if a copy of such amendment has not been sent to the Secretary five days before the day fixed for the discussion of the resolution, any member may object to the moving of the amendment and such objection shall prevail——". I do not know whether this amendment was placed before the Secretary five days before the actual sitting: if it was not, I submit it is out of order.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, in moving this amendment——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have raised a point of order. The question of moving this amendment does not arise because my point of order is against the moving of it at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, I do not want to waste the time in useless talk about technicalities. Kindly go straight to this matter about the point of order that has been raised and then I want to finish.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I hold the view that (1) an amendment becomes inadmissible if it negatives the original motion. (2) I felt that the language of the original resolution was such as would interfere with our liberty of speech here as some of the items mentioned in it are likely to be considered *sub judice*. (3) In one paragraph I have actually supported what the honourable mover has tried to bring in in greater detail. (4) By moving my amendment I feel that the House will have a wider scope to discuss this great problem in which, I assure gentlemen opposite, there is no difference of opinion. (5) As to the other point of order raised, you will perhaps get the information from the Secretary of the Assembly that the original resolutions were circulated yesterday at about 3 in the afternoon and within one hour of that my amendment was submitted. Therefore, if the original motion need not take 5 days or 21 days or whatever the Rules of Business demand, I am quite within time. (6) Another point is, Sir, that your predecessor in office did allow motions similar to mine—I am referring to Sir Azizul Haque—and the House will remember that in the last session, a resolution was moved by Khan Bahadur Aulad Husain and in direct contradistinction to it the Deputy Speaker, who then ruled the House, allowed the resolution moved by the Secretary of the Progressive Party. My amendment, Sir, does not, in any way, militate against either the rulings of your predecessors or the rules of discussion in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: In my opinion this amendment is only a substitute for the original resolution and if I had a free hand in the matter I would have disallowed it, but as is pointed out by Mr. Siddiqi there are certain precedents which go against my own opinion and I think it will be unfair at this stage if I disallow this amendment.

With regard to the time Mr. Siddiqi is perfectly right. The original motions were received up till 5 even yesterday. I allowed that. Therefore, if an amendment comes today I cannot disallow it on that ground.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Where is the precedent that a completely negative amendment——

Mr. SPEAKER: I have seen two cases which in my opinion lend some colour to the contention raised by Mr. Siddiqi. As regards the form I have got some doubt and I propose to Mr. Siddiqi to put his amendment in this form: "This Assembly is of opinion that the efforts of the present Ministry to implement their programme in regard to the policy of release of political prisoners and the amenities granted to them and their families are commendable and is of opinion that considering the present political conditions in the province Government should expedite the release of political prisoners by reviewing individual cases" and so forth.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Yes, Sir, put it in any language you like.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Just one point on this point of order. If you are convinced that this is a bad precendent, Sir, would you not at once change for the future so that it will not go out as another precedent?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will certainly look into the matter and in future I may have to revise the whole thing.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: As a matter of fact we have grave doubts. We will not challenge your ruling in the House, but, Sir, we submit that on second consideration after prayer time—prayer time is coming—you can withhold your ruling on this ground.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed this. Mr. Siddiqi.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I beg to move——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir, we have not had any notice of the motion that is proposed to be moved and, Sir, it does not lie, under the rules, in the Speaker to amend any resolution or amendment given notice of by a member. The form of an amendment is there and if the form is acceptable to the Speaker it may be admitted. It is not the function, I humbly submit, Sir, of the Speaker in the House to direct or help a member to revise his motion so as to bring it within the admissibility by Speaker and thus permit him to proceed on with something which is contentious. Certain things have been done in connection with Bills and amendments to Bills, only on agreement of all sides, and verbal alterations also have been permitted in the past to enable improvements in language, etc., but, Sir, where there are fundamental differences between the view-points sponsored by one section and those of another and where objections have been raised on the ground of inadmissibility because of such wording or form, I respectfully submit that we cannot agree to the amendment to the amendment that is now being made and which is now being permitted without any notice whatever.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, such things have been done in this House hundreds of times—not once or twice.

Mr. SPEAKER: I allow it. Mr. Siddiqi.

Non-official Resolutions.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that the resolution of Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta do take the following form that this Assembly is of opinion that the efforts of the present Ministry to implement their programme in regard to the policy of release of political prisoners and the amenities granted to them and their families are commendable and is of opinion that considering the present political conditions in the province Government should expedite the release of political prisoners by reviewing individual cases and should grant suitable and generous amenities to those who might not be released at once, and their families.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: On a point of order. The manner in which the honourable member moved the resolution is not that of an amendment but is that of an independent resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have allowed it. Mr. Siddiqi, let us continue after prayer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I would like to give a notice of amendment to this amendment.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I beg to give you notice of a short amendment to the motion proposed to be moved or moved by Mr. Siddiqi which runs in these words: "Substitute the words 'insufficient and unsatisfactory' for the word 'commendable' in line 4 and add after the words 'individual cases' in line 7 the following words, namely, 'so as to secure the release of detenus within a month and convicted prisoners as soon as possible'."

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I cannot allow this. If I allow it, that means negativing my own ruling in this way that an amendment to an amendment is not permissible I have allowed this as an amendment and if I allow this now then that becomes a substantive resolution. Therefore I cannot do a thing which is contradictory in itself. I quite realise that the difficulty is that this is a substitute for the original resolution and as I have said but for the precedent I would not have allowed it. It will be extremely unfair at this stage all of a sudden to disallow this motion of Mr. Siddiqi which I have taken as an amendment.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Before you give your ruling, Sir, I submit for your consideration——

Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: আপনাদের motionটা withdraw করে নিয়ে এটাকে substitute motion বলে ধরে নিন না কেন?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am not questioning your ruling, Sir. You have in the previous ruling allowed a substitution. The language of that is substituted and when a resolution is substituted, it becomes a resolution or motion. My amendment is with regard to certain wordings of that substituted motion and, Sir, that substituted motion has certain words which might be acceptable to us.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of order, Sir. I submit, Sir, that the proceedings should be conducted in accordance with the rules. I do not think that at this stage Dr. Sanyal can propose anything. You have got a right to accept this amendment or not; that is your discretion. I do not want to interfere with that, but Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi has moved his resolution (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, resolution!)—no, no—his amendment and he has got to deliver his speech. In between no other person can speak except on a point of order. I submit, Sir, that Dr. Sanyal should wait till Mr. Siddiqi has finished his speech.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am grateful to the Chief Minister for having given me an idea as to when I should move a particular motion. In fact, I only said at the beginning when I got-up: "I give notice of this amendment". I do not intend to speak on this. I reserve my speech in case you accept this amendment and find it in order then naturally I shall speak after the original speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I regret I have to disallow your so-called amendment, Dr. Sanyal, and I think you have already understood the reasons.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: No, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have given my reasons and I cannot go beyond that. Mr. Siddiqi.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not think that my innocent amendment would create so much disturbance in the minds of people——(A VOICE FROM THE OPPOSITION BENCHES: Because it has got a motive behind it) who have added their signatures to the resolution moved by the honourable lady member—people who sat for 16 months silently looking at things and allowing hundreds of persons to be arrested, to be put into jails and to be treated there in the manner my predecessors have explained to us in such pathetic detail. And yet now because a better set of people has come to take charge of this problem, a set of people that has come to the task with ideals born of 30 to 35 years of preparation in the battle for liberty, for freedom, for the rights of citizenship; now that solutions are being found, men who allowed all these terrible activities to go on, men who sold Provincial Autonomy, men who sold Bengal itself because they wanted to stick to office by their teeth——(Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sold to whom?) sold to Civilians whom they were never tired of running down, have come forward to put spokes into the wheel of progress—a wheel that, Sir, in time, will lead to the release, will lead to the freedom of these people. (A VOICE FROM THE OPPOSITION BENCHES: In time!) Yes, in time but not 16 months. Sir, I go further and say that if you had not made them *functus officio* on the 29th March, more pernicious persecution of my brothers and my sisters——(cries of "Oh! oh!" from the Opposition Benches) I give no monopoly in nationalism to any section, particularly to the political renegades to speak in the name of my fellow citizens and countrymen whom they sent to jails. These people who have now metamorphosed from persecutors into advocates, Sir, I again repeat, were eager to stick to office and ready to kiss the boots that kicked them. Now when we have started on a programme of releases and amenities, they realise the magnitude of their folly and wish to cover it up with makebelieve advocacy and unreal friendship. With your permission, Sir, I should like to read to the House the policy and programme along which we wish to proceed. My honourable leader and the Leader of the House, before he took office, said that the group now sitting to your right will do its best and try to get liberty of the Press and liberty to hold meetings; to make a national approach in dealing with arrests, detentions and trials for political offences; regular and periodical reviews of the cases of political prisoners

by some independent tribunal; to secure their release or to provide amenities for them—amenities for detenus about food, clothing, medical attendance, interviews, studies, letters and miscellaneous supplies; and family allowances to security prisoners.

The honourable mover of the motion under discussion should have informed herself before lending her name to it for the reason, Sir, that, and I am absolutely certain about it, had she been shown this programme, she would not have allowed herself to be manoeuvred into a position that is awkard, unnatural, hopeless and untrue.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How long are we to wait?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: In December, 1941, when the old Council of Ministers resigned, political security prisoners under rule 26, numbered somewhere between 100 to 200 or 250. On the 28th of February, 1943, a month before it went out, the number had gone up to 1,759. Do they expect that by the pressing of an electric button the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, who is also the Home Minister, will suddenly open all the doors of all the jails and set at liberty all the prisoners in custody in Bengal? These things require time.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Till doomsday we have got to wait then!

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: You had waited for 16 months without so much as a grumble or protest We have to wait for some time more. If the previous Ministry had been allowed to continue office, those in prison more and many more persons would have been sent to another place which I need not mention Gentlemen opposite are trying to teach us what to do when they have sold their souls, to my mind, with shamefacedness of a type that would make any man hang his head in shame. They stand condemned in the eyes of their fellow countrymen and will be well advised not to open their lips on this subject. Office was dearer to them than the liberty of their compatriots. Since taking office the present Council of Ministers has already released 110 prisoners and friends opposite, if I may call them friends, will realise that cases are being considered and judged with the utmost expedition and sympathy, not because gentlemen opposite will shout but because, Sir, I consider it a matter in which the honour of the Muslim League is involved. Not they, but the Muslim League will bring about the freedom and liberty of Bengal. For honourable members opposite, it is a matter of political tactics; to me it is almost a fundamental of faith. I want my Hindu compatriots to realise that the Muslim League considers the question of the freedom and liberty of the Hindu as equal to or even greater than that of the Muslim for the reason that the rights of the Zimmi, as you know, Sir, if this were a Muslim Government, would get priority over the rights of the Muslim.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Not so for Mr. Jinnah anyway!

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: It is difficult to bring round a caste-ridden mentality to realise the wideness of the Muslim outlook because we cannot think in a circumscribed and restricted manner.

Mr. SPEAKER: Don't bring in controversial matters please.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He is soaring beyond caste.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I am soaring in regions (Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee: Where angels fear to tread) into which it has been difficult for me to bring my compatriots. In this very resolution, Sir, as a Muslim poet has put it—

تو ہی ناداں چند کلیوں پر قناعت کر گیا
ورنہ گلشن میں علاج تنگیٔ داماں بھی تھا

[O you ignorant man, you have been satisfied with
just a few buds;
Although there were enough flowers in the garden
to fill the skirt of your garment.]

Where the question of the freedom and rights of the citizen is involved, I would not lower it down to the level of sending letters, getting one more ounce of atta or two ounces more of rice and dal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Teach that to your Mr. Jinnah.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I will have to teach it to men whom my critics consider to be bigger than Mr. Jinnah; men who ran away at the moment when they should have been in the field of battle. Sir, the case of India cannot be fought by men who possess a restricted vision and call themselves nationalists. I hope, and feel certain, that it will be fought and won by men with an international mind.

Sir, demands have been made that this should be done and that should be done. The two speakers who preceded me appeared to forget that there is a thing like a war going on on our eastern frontier. They forget that in Bengal normal law has almost ceased to exist. Ordinances are being inflicted upon us from the Centre from day to day. A subordinate Government, and here I want to put in a bit of recommendation for mercy through you to the other side of the House, a subordinate Government has not got that liberty of action which it would have had in normal days. That being so, what can be done is being done, not because there are people who wish to stick to office but because there are people who want to safeguard their honour and the dignity and rectitude of the political faith to which they hold. The difficulty, if I may put it that way, has been that the predecessors of the present Council of Ministers allowed things to go from bad to worse. If I may describe the present Ministers, I cannot do better than call them a Salvage Corps. We find them in a condition in which if they are able to clear the mess they inherited in six months I shall be a happy man. I once called them scavengers also but only political scavengers. The mess that was left to them, the hopeless mess the previous Ministry had made at a time when we should have been on the *qui vive* all the time for our rights, had to be cleared. Now we are there with courageous hearts and strong sinews and God willing, in proper time, we will clear it.

The resolution, Sir, has two main parts and I do not know—legal gentlemen will perhaps correct me—whether, in view of the fact that rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules has become a judicial football between the High Courts and the Federal Court, we can discuss it in detail here. I have my views on the point. That was the reason why, Sir, I wanted to remove it from my amendment.

They have also asked for the release of people involved in the so-called "rebellion" consequent upon the arrest of Congress leaders. So long as Gandhiji and the Congress itself—I mean all the members of the Working Committee—are in prison, to make a demand for the immediate release of all political prisoners is to demand something which is unattainable and impracticable. If this Government could do it, I would work for it like a slave for the rest of my life. It is, as I have pointed out, a subordinate Government. So long as the present Governor-General is there and so long as the present Secretary of State is there, it is impossible to imagine that they will try to solve this problem. There is, however, one point on which I should like to draw the attention of the present Ministers and that is the application of Regulation III of 1818 to detain politically-minded Indians. There was no need to make use of it, especially when the High Court had released people. It was a mistake and action was taken while the Governor and the Home Minister were out of Calcutta, as was proved by affidavit in the High Court. I should like to appeal to the present Council of Ministers that the sooner they recall action under it, the sooner they forget that there is an antediluvian law called Regulation III of 1818, the better it will be for everybody in this province.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Then, support this resolution.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: I am carrying the resolution several steps further than what the honourable member who drafted it, desired. It was to save it against criticism and to defend better the liberty of our brothers and sisters in jail, that this amendment was tabled. What I wish to impress upon the House is that the liberty of the person, the liberty of the citizen shall be safeguarded and action will be taken by the present Council of Ministers in a manner that will bring honour to itself and happiness to our people.

I should like honourable members opposite to see that this matter is taken out of party politics. They have taken up cudgels on behalf of political prisoners whom they incarcerated, even members of this House. They consider that we are the givers of liberty and freedom. That is the whole burden of the demand. Release them all and release them at once. So far as the present Chief Minister and Home Minister is concerned, I am convinced in my belief and so should be at least members of the official Congress Party, that India has not produced a bigger liberator than the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin. (Laughter from the Opposition Benches.) In this I am using language which is not my own. I am using the language of one of their own leaders with whom I had intimate and friendly relations. If ever they get access to the conversations Gandhiji had in Calcutta and

outside, regarding the release of political prisoners in Bengal, they will admit in their heart of hearts that the number of persons released by Sir Nazimuddin was several times larger than those released in all the Congress provinces rolled together. A Congress leader of eminence also said to me, "Siddiqi, I started with a dislike for him but after coming into contact with him I must say, when Nazimuddin says 'Yes' he means 'Yes' and when Nazimuddin says 'No' he means 'No' " (loud applause from the Opposition Benches).

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: He says "No" more than "Yes".

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir Nazimuddin has said "Yes". He uttered it in his great statement I quoted in my speech earlier "Wait and See".

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: How long?

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Not for sixteen months. If you could swallow all the nonsense that was uttered and done during the sixteen months in which the previous Ministry held office, give Sir Nazimuddin also some time. I beg of them, Sir, to develop a better sense of proportion and not to give in to shoutings and meaningless twaddle. The matter is too serious to be used for party purposes. I want them also to realise that there are people outside their own little fold who hold to higher principles, who believe in higher ideals and who have a wider sense of brotherhood than they have shown during the last six years that we have been here.

Sir, I need not add more. Times are difficult. We can go on fighting inside this Assembly if it is so desired, but with the situation as it exists outside this hall and in the country, with the obstinacy of the Central Government not to take into account the wishes of the four hundred million people of this country, many of whom are shedding their blood for a cause which is not theirs, for democracy, even in the sense that an Englishman understands it, is being denied to us, we have to work under many difficulties. On every side that we turn there is an Ordinance, there is obstinacy, there is intransigence and there are many things which we do not like. I am speaking from my heart, Sir, and I hope my words will touch a sympathetic chord in the hearts of honourable gentlemen opposite so that they may rise above purely party considerations. Here, let us all unite if we can and find freedom for ourselves. Criminals apart, I am personally of the opinion that a man should not be persecuted for his poiltical faith. We are on this side today, we may have to go to the other side tomorrow. If the honourable member for the University of Calcutta becomes the Premier he will not order me to hold a political faith against my wishes; he will not say that this or that is dangerous for the country. It is, therefore, that I plead to them, through you, Sir, not to put venom into their speeches, not to look at this problem in any other way but in the way in which we are trying, with great difficulty, to look at it with a view to find solutions to remove the obstacles in the way of our brothers who are being persecuted for holding political opinions which are praised on the one side and denounced on the other. I commend my amendment to the House and I do hope that

the honourable mover will take my words in the spirit in which I am uttering them. We are all walking along the same path. We all want the same thing. There is difference of opinion about the method as to how we shall attain the goal. I assure my friends, through you, Sir, that we shall not follow the lines laid down by the previous Ministry because their activities were confined to mere words, words and words: Insha-Allah, now it will be action, action, action.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Sir, I beg to move by way of amendment that clauses (*c*) and (*d*) of the resolution No. 1 of Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta be omitted and the following proviso be added, namely:—

"provided that by gradual examination of each and every case, Government are satisfied that the release is not likely to endanger the safety and security of the province or jeopardise public peace and tranquillity".

Sir, we have full sympathy for the release of political prisoners. I am practically supporting the resolution moved by Mrs Nellie Sen Gupta with this modification that she wants a tribunal to be appointed to review the cases of political prisoners, but I think that a tribunal will take a long time and that is a cumbrous way to review the cases. I think Government in the present situation are the fit agency to look after their cases because Government at the present stage have full sympathy for the political prisoners. From their attitude it appears that during the short tenure of the present Cabinet a large number of political prisoners have been released and at the same time their allowance sanctioned before January has been doubled and their family allowance sanctioned before January has been doubled. Their subsistence allowance also has been liberally considered. In these circumstances I think that Government at the present stage are the fit agency to consider and expedite the release of political prisoners. We also want to expedite the release of political prisoners. If any tribunal is to be appointed to review their cases, I think it will take a long time or rather it will be a policy to shelve the cases of political prisoners.

Sir, we have full sympathy for political prisoners. Some of my friends have spoken about the grievances and sufferings of political prisoners. I think these are the grievances and sufferings during the time of the late Ministry. I think during the time of the present Cabinet such sufferings and such treatment are to be heard no more.

In view of all these facts I have moved my amendment and I commend it to the acceptance of the House

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the resolution that has been so ably moved by Mrs. Sen Gupta. The resolution deals with two classes of people. It deals with detenus who have been arrested and kept in detention without trial for an indefinite period and it also deals with persons convicted since 9th August, 1942. One part of the resolution also deals with the appointment of a tribunal for reviewing the cases of those convicts and detenus and lastly it deals

with the amenities and treatment provided for political prisoners in jails. The resolution demands that a non-official committee be composed to advise Government on the amenities and treatment provided in jails and detention camps for different classes of political prisoners and detenus.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it seems to me that the Hon'ble Chief Minister who is also the Home Minister is in error when he says that with regard to the interpretation of rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules the matter is *sub judice*. This matter is not *sub judice*. It has been found in the Federal Court by the Chief Justice, Sir Maurice Gwyer, that rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules is illegal and *ultra vires*. This matter is not *sub judice*. In order to validate this, there was a validating Ordinance by the Governor-General with a view to amend the Defence of India Act. But it has been found by the Calcutta High Court that this so-called validating Ordinance cannot be passed. This is also illegal and *ultra vires* because His Excellency the Governor-General has not got the power to amend an Act of the Legislature. So, Sir, these people were certainly detained without trial and they were detained illegally at least for a certain period, viz., between the time when the judgment of the Federal Court was delivered by Sir Maurice Gwyer and the time when the validating Ordinance was issued. During this period these people were detained illegally and I am quite sure compensation can be demanded from the Government for their illegal detention.

Then, Sir, I shall deal with persons who have been convicted since August, 1942. These people were convicted by Special Magistrates under the Special Courts Ordinance and it has been held by the High Court and the judgment of the High Court has been confirmed by the Federal Court saying that the Special Court Ordinance is illegal and *ultra vires*

Then, Sir, His Excellency the Governor-General of India has issued another Ordinance to the effect that a conviction by the Special Court will be treated as a conviction by the ordinary court The matter stands thus and this Ordinance has also been disputed.

So, Sir, so far as detention of detenus is concerned, I may submit that this is really an illegal detention. It has been said that these people were detained or arrested during the regime of the past Ministry. But you must remember that since 9th August, 1942, there have been disturbances in the country and most of the arrests were made after the 9th August, 1942. Before 9th August, 1942, the number of security prisoners were 447 and after the 9th August, 1942, the number has risen to 1,600 and odd.

Sir, the question before the House is whether these prisoners should be released immediately or not. The programme of the present Ministry contained that these detenus would be released. After the present Ministry was formed on the 25th April, almost three months have elapsed and it has been said that 110 prisoners have been released. But the question is of the 110 prisoners who have been released how many were ordered to be released previously? There are about 1,700 prisoners still in jail and there are many prisoners who have become invalid, there are many prisoners who are suffering from serious illness. I know of a case in Comilla Jail. Babu Sarat

Chandra Chakravarty, a man of 70, has been suffering from serious illness. This person also has not been released. There are many other prisoners who have been suffering from serious illness. A member of the House, Babu Nikunja Behary Maiti, has been suffering from duodenal ulcer in the Medical College Hospital. Another member, Babu Kamal Krishna Roy, has also been suffering from duodenal ulcer in the Medical College Hospital. These persons have not been released. I may mention that Babu Sarat Chandra Chakravarty who is aged 70 has been suffering from eye disease and I can say from my personal knowledge that he will lose his eye sight in the course of a few days. But still he has not been released. Sir, in spite of the report from Intelligence Branch recommending their release, these persons are not being released. Another person, Manmatha Nath Das who has been suffering very seriously has not been released. Can any explanation be given by this Ministry as to why those persons who have been suffering from illness and have submitted their petitions for release and about whom Intelligence Branch have given their report favourably have not been released? Why have they not been released? Because this question is not treated with sympathy by the present Ministry.

Apart from the question of release I ask what has been done with regard to the convicts. What has been done about their allowance and other amenities? It may be contended with some force that the diet allowance has been increased from 12 annas—15 annas to Rs. 1-8. In the year 1932 when rice was selling at Rs. 5-10 if I may remember correctly, the diet allowance was Rs. 1-4. Now rice is selling at Rs. 32 to Rs. 40 and the diet allowance is Rs. 1-8 only.

Then with regard to the family allowance there are thousands of applications and only about 100 persons have been receiving family allowance. You do not realise the misery of the dependants of those people. I was in jail and I know that persons who have been detained without trial and those persons who have been convicted by the courts which have been found by the Federal Court as illegal, are receiving letters from their dependants almost every day that they are starving. This is due to the abnormal rise in price not only of foodstuffs but also of other necessaries of life. Look at the misery of the people. They are in detention; they are helpless; but in spite of that what has been done with regard to the family allowance? I am told, and it is all right, that the maximum amount of family allowance is Rs. 75 and the minimum is Rs. 6, and it is said that family allowance will be increased 100 per cent. in some cases and 50 per cent. in some other cases. I do not know whether the family allowance has been increased or not, but it has been sought to be increased subject to one proviso. The proviso is that in no case the allowance should exceed the income of the security prisoner at the time of his arrest. Well, I may say that a person who used to earn Rs. 10 at the time of his arrest, may earn Rs. 1,000 afterwards. Times have changed. Moreover, the income of a person who used to earn Rs. 300 previously is Rs. 10 according to the Intelligence Branch report. Mrs. Sen Gupta was giving an instance that a doctor was earning Rs. 150, but according to the Intelligence Branch report his income was

Rs. 15 and he was given Rs. 15 only. If his allowance be increased to Rs. 30 or 100 per cent. even then it would be quite insufficient due to the abnormal rise in the price of foodstuffs and other necessaries of life. These are the things which should be considered at this stage, but these things do not weigh with the present Ministers. It is said that the family allowance will be doubled. But it will be increased subject to a very bad proviso and this proviso will really frustrate the real intention behind the increase. I want to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this department whether any increase has been allowed and what is the maximum amount that is now being granted. We know that the maximum is Rs. 75 now. To a person who has 5 to 10 dependants Rs. 75 is practically nothing. Rupees 75 of today is equal to Rs. 15 in the past. Nowadays with one rupee you cannot purchase what could be purchased with even four annas previously. I say therefore that having regard to the rise in price of rice and other staple foodstuffs and other necessaries of life, the family allowance of all persons who have been detained without trial should be reasonably increased. If this is not done, the concesison now proposed to be given will mean nothing.

There are other grievances which should be looked into. There are grievances with regard to interviews, there are grievances with regard to letters and with regard to an absurd rule that the security prisoners will have to apply for permission to have their money deposited in the jail. I know in one case an application was made about 9 months before but no permission was granted to him. What is the necessity for permission to deposit their money in the jail? Besides these, cooked food is not allowed to the security prisoners in the jail. While I was coming to attend the meetings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly I was told by a person that certain interviews have been refused by the jail officers of the Comilla Jail. What are the reasons for this? So far as the Midnapore Jail is concerned internees there are not allowed any interviews. They are not allowed any letters. So far as the convicts are concerned, they have got numerous grievances. I can cite one instance. Dr. Nripendra Nath Bose who is an M.B. and a good physician of Bengal and who had a leading practice in Comilla and commands the respect not only of the people of Tippera but of the whole of Bengal while transferred from Comilla to Alipore Central Jail or some other jail was handcuffed by the Military Intelligence Officer who went to the jail gate and handcuffed him. Throughout the journey he was brought handcuffed. In Barisal handcuffs, fetters and whipping were resorted to. Sir, this is the treatment which is meted out to the political prisoners. In the Midnapore Jail these political convicts have been put to the *ghani*. These are instances of mal-treatment meted out to the political convicts. The political convicts are not allowed to mix with others. In their case rules have been brushed aside and they have been put in a very insanitary and dark room. It is impossible to enumerate all the grievances of the political prisoners especially of the division III prisoners. If you know the grievances of——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Let me at least finish my sentence, Sir. If you know the grievances of the Division III prisoners, who are political prisoners, you will admit that they are many. I am not sure whether Government can accept this resolution because they are not the real masters of the situation. Sir John Herbert, Porter & Company are the real masters. If Government accept the resolution it will be a mere recommendation to the real masters who may not accept that recommendation.

(At this stage the member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have got slips from different party leaders showing the names of members who wish to speak. As the number of speakers is still large, I hope you will be as brief as possible.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, আমার বক্তৃতা আরম্ভ করবার পূর্ব্বেই, দেখছি মাননীয় হোম মিনিষ্টার সাহেব, তিনি, তাঁর অন্য লোকদের সঙ্গে একটা তর্ক করছেন।

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Sarkar, will you speak in English?

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: কাল মিঃ স্পীকার ruling দিয়েছেন, বাংলায় যাঁরা বক্তৃতা করতে চান, তাঁরা তা করতে পারেন, এবং আমি সেই বিশ্বাসেই বলছিলাম।

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is no use citing the ruling of the Speaker. I know you can speak very well in English. The rule is definite. The proceedings of the Assembly will be in English. At the same time it is very difficult for our reporters to take down the speech in Bengali.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, before I begin my speech, I would like to draw your attention to the conversation which is going on between the Hon'ble Home Minister and some other gentlemen round about him and I would request you to direct the Hon'ble Home Minister to be attentive to my speech.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: What are you going to say?

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Whatever it may be.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I rise on a point of order, Sir? Under the rules of parliamentary procedure, it is not within the rights of a member to request the Chair to ask another honourable member to listen to him, be he a Minister or otherwise. In the House of Commons it is the normal thing for members to walk out as and when they please. The House is sometimes full and sometimes it is almost empty, being only within the limits of a quorum. (Interruption.) I don't know why these people interfere when I am asking the Chair to guide us in a matter of procedure.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You know that it is the duty of the Chair to see that the Hon'ble Leader of the House and the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition are in order when an honourable member is speaking.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Before I begin my speech I must congratulate Mrs. Sen Gupta for bringing this resolution before this House. The late lamented Mr. Sen Gupta was one of the most prominent leaders of Bengal and he died as a political prisoner. Therefore I think that it is most befitting that his beloved wife should bring forward this resolution in this critical time.

Now, Sir, I have something to say about Comrade Siddiqi who has come down from Sind to Bengal to preach his sermons as a Muslim *pundit*. He has tried his fortune in several parts of the world and could not suceed. Now here in Bengal he has taken his position as one of the leaders of the Muslim League in order to exploit the Muslim Bengal as the owner, director and manager of an insurance company. His supposed sympathy on behalf of the political prisoners, I may humbly submit, is without any foundation as it will be proved by his very speech.

The resolution speaks of two kinds of political prisoners and one is the class of prisoners who were convicted after the movement of August, 1942. This kind of political prisoners the mover of the amendment Mr. Siddiqi keeps out of his consideration and he says that this kind of prisoners cannot be released before the resolution of the Congress is withdrawn. Then there is another kind of political prisoners who are in jail, as for example the political prisoners relating to Armoury Raid of Chittagong. These prisoners have been in jail from the time even before the present constitution was launched and the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin was in his ministerial *gadi* for five long years before Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq became the Chief Minister a second time. These people were not released then and I think that these men are not within the consideration of the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin.

Then there is a kind of prisoners that remain and they are the prisoners who are detained or convicted under the Defence of India Rules. We are not considering the cases of prisoners who have been taken back again immediately after their release behind the prison bars by this benign Ministry. Therefore I submit that any kind of political prisoners, convicted or detained, are not getting any consideration whatsoever from the hands of the so-called champions of liberty and human freedom. I submit that whatever Mr. Siddiqi has said has no foundation. He has, I submit, only fired some blank cartridges without any intention of doing good to any kind of political prisoners.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Then he is harmless.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: I submit that the speech of Mr. Siddiqi should be taken in its proper worth because the speeches of insurance agents, insurance men and insurance managers are exaggerated, and without any foundation and have very little meaning as the world knows. I must finish my speech with the remark that his speech is nothing but the speech of an insurance canvasser as he has come to Bengal as an exploiter from the remote corner of Sind.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: May I say a word.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Siddiqi, there is no time. Now I shall call upon Mr. David Hendry to make his speech.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Sir, I have not finished my speech yet.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry. I thought you had finished. You may go on with your speech.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Political prisoners are not new in Bengal. Some laws or some regulations were passed in the beginning of the 19th century when the Muslims tried to regain their power. Regulation III is one of the relics of the archaic laws. After that, several laws, several regulations, several Defence of Indian Rules and Defence of India Acts were passed and for the last 150 years Bengal has been seeing oppression, repression and suppression of all kinds of political workers. Now this time also under the garb of the Defence of India Rules hundreds of young men, patriotic gentlemen, lovers of society are behind the prison bars. What is their fault? They are lovers of their country, they like to liberate their country and for this reason the white-faced gentlemen on my left are very cruel on them.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: How can you say that?

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: I am sorry. It is now a matter of history that people of France, people of Belgium and people of other subjugated countries are being instigated by the so-called civilized Governments to rise against their established Governments. What sin have these people of Bengal committed? What sin have these lovers of their country, these patriots of India, committed that they are now thrown behind the prison bars under the garb of lawless laws? It is said that some kind of prestige, the prestige of Government, the prestige of the British people are at the back. I say, we have seen what kind of prestige these European Governments have. We have even seen that this British Government have run away from Hongkong to Chindwin—a distance of five thousand miles—for safety. They have been oppressed by the Japanese at Hongkong, Malay and some other places. If they could not take revenge for this under the garb of prestige, I think it is an absurd thing to say that they are now trying to keep up their prestige. Now we find, Sir, that with John Bull Uncle Sam has joined, that is, with them the Muslim Leaguers are now in alliance. The present members of the Government think that the Congress and the Nationalist Groups are their political opponents. Therefore it is clear that the Government in collaboration or in conjunction with their foreign masters are trying to keep these political prisoners who belong either to the Congress or to the Nationalist Groups behind the prison bar. Whatever they say is a mere eye-wash and they have no intention to release these prisoners.

Today it has been published in papers that only 2 per cent. of the recruits of India are being supplied by Bengal. I ask now very seriously what is the cause for this? Popular leaders of Bengal are all now behind the prison bar. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose are in

prison, and Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose is in wilderness. Unless and until these people are liberated there is no hope of mobilising the forces of the country to stand against the aggression of the Japanese who are knocking at the south-eastern gate of our country. I very seriously ask the present Government to consider the present situation in the country and unless and until they take steps immediately to liberate the leaders of the country, it is vain to hope that this country will stand against the onslaught of the Axis Powers, especially Japanese aggression.

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall endeavour to be brief, but I should like to express our attitude to this question of release of political prisoners. None of us can contemplate with any sort of happiness our fellowmen in detention. The personal liberty of the individual is a very sacred thing and should not be lightly taken away. I can well believe that it gives least satisfaction of all to the present Ministry to see so many of their fellow countrymen behind prison bars. There are circumstances, however, Sir, in which detention is necessary for the safety and the maintenance of internal security of the province as a whole, circumstances where the detention of a few means preventing misery and loss befalling upon many.

Moreover, we are in the midst of war, and in war time internal security is more urgent and necessary than at any other time, not only for the continued safety of the province but for the promotion of the war effort and the speedy defeat of the enemy at our gates. In the circumstances, restrictions on the liberty of the subject are unfortunately necessary which would not be admissible under normal conditions. We in this party dislike the thought of any one being detained under the Defence of India Rules longer than is justified, but the criterion must be that the Government is satisfied before releasing any detenu that he will not be dangerous to the province, to its war effort or to its internal peace and security.

There are, Sir, broadly speaking, three classes of persons detained under the Defence of India Rules at the present time:—

Firstly, there are persons who are members of subversive organisations whose main aim is the overthrow of Government established by law and to interfere with the internal peace and security of the province.

So long as there is no clear and definite evidence that the policy of such suversive organisations has been changed or that they are prepared to co-operate with Government in the promotion of the war effort and support law and order, we consider that there should be no question of wholesale release of members of such subversive organisations.

Secondly, there is a class of persons who are not members of any subversive organisation, but who join in a mass movement. These are mainly the persons who were implicated in the sabotage campaign which followed last year upon the Congress resolution of August, 1942. This campaign, as we all know, did serious damage to vital communications, to railways, telegraphs, etc., and to life and property. This campaign did, in fact, do serious damage to the war effort at a time when the danger from

Japan was much greater than it is now.* Furthermore, it added to the difficulties which have led to the food crisis with which we are now faced and can only be viewed as being highly detrimental to the good of the country as a whole. That it did not do more serious damage to war production in essential industries in Bengal is due to the fact that the labour which is engaged in essential industries did not join the campaign and the labour leaders with very few exceptions stood aloof from it.

That ill-conceived and ill-advised campaign has fortunately died down although we should like confirmation from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that it has completely ceased, for example, in Midnapore. There is also, we think, general recognition that the campaign was a tragic mistake and detrimental to the true interests of the people of India. The question now is, what to do with regard to persons detained because of their implication in that campaign. We must remember that the campaign has not yet been called off. We must remember also that in the present circumstances sabotage and further interference with vital communications will not only gravely endanger the war effort but greatly aggravate the present food situation.

In these circumstances we think Government should exercise caution, a caution which it might forego in more normal circumstances. It cannot, in our opinion, indulge in the luxury of a general release of all detenus, however much they might like to do so. We think that they should, however, follow a policy of gradual release in batches of those persons who they are satisfied, will not endanger the war effort nor the peace and security of the province. It would be necessary for them to watch the effect of the release of each batch carefully and before releasing further batches to be sure that those already released were not engaged in activities detrimental to the war effort and so on; and that they were themselves convinced that the campaign of sabotage in which they were implicated was very wrong indeed.

There is a third class of persons under restraint to which I should like to refer. This is a class of labour agitators externed from industrial areas or whose movements are restricted because they are engaged in promoting labour troubles in essential industries. Many labour leaders have adopted a more responsible attitude towards the war effort and co-operated in the peaceful settlement of labour disputes, but there have been exceptions whose object has been to prevent peaceful settlement, promote strikes in essential industries and create trouble generally. Such labour agitators should, in our mind, continue to be externed or kept under detention, and we trust that no question of cancelling orders of externment or restrictions against these agitators will be taken.

For these reasons, Sir, we must oppose this resolution and we are also opposed to the immediate general releases but favour gradual discriminating release of detenus under the Defence of India Rules.

With regard to the appointment of a special committee to consider the cases of detenus we have every confidence in the judgment of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in this matter and we are also opposed to the proposal for the appointment of a tribunal to review cases of political prisoners for the same reason.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I accord my wholehearted support to the resolution which has been so ably and so feelingly moved by my esteemed friend Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta. Sir, Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi in his accustomed and inimitable style has indulged in vituperation and invectives for which he always chooses to take credit in this House. The brunt of his attack has been directed against the last Ministry. He has sought to show that the last Ministry was guilty of failure, negligence and deliberate acts of overlooking the needs and requirements of the political prisoners in the matter of their amenities and release. Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi has held out the Muslim League in Bengal as the liberator of the province and with the milk of human kindness his heart has overflown in the interest of his brothers and sisters in this province who are now behind the prison bars.

While I was listening to him, Sir, I was recalling to my mind an expression which was used by the same Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi on an earlier occasion in this House when during the regime of the first Ministry which was formed in 1937 the case of the political prisoners came up before this House when some of them had gone on hunger strike in protest against the treatment meted out to them in jail. It was this Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi who then said, had the hardihood and effrontery to say, that these political prisoners could not expect the treatment of damads or sons-in-law in their father-in-law's house. It is the same Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi who now poses as the champion of these political prisoners.

Now, Sir, when the last Ministry came into office they were startled to find that it was Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin in his capacity as Home Minister in the previous Government who had turned down the proposal of the Government of India more than once for an increase in the allowances of political prisoners. The Government of India on the recommendation of the committee appointed at the instance of Mr. N. M Joshi had suggested more than once to the Government of Bengal that the upper limit of family allowances for security prisoners should be lifted and that the principle which had been adopted by the other Provincial Governments should also be adopted in Bengal. It was Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin in his capacity as Home Minister who had relentlessly turned down that proposal more than once. (Cries of "shame", "shame" from Opposition Benches.) One of the first acts of the last Government was to remove that upper limit and to lay down the policy that there would be no upper limit and each case would be considered on its own merits. That was the policy which was laid down by the last Government. But unfortunately for the last Ministry, in carrying out that policy, in the execution of that policy, the subordinate officers of the Police Department had gone wrong and repeatedly the Ministers had to raise their voice against the way the subordinate police officers were carrying on their duties in the matter of assessing the needs of the poor harassed families of the political prisoners. That was our experience.

Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi in his own felicitous language, which I will not compare even with the languge of billingsgate, chose to jeer at the last Ministry. I would only say that but for the last Ministry's efforts it would

not have been possible to raise the upper limit and to go as far as Rs. 100 in one case from Rs. 10, which was Sir Nazimuddin's final maximum limit with regard to family allowances. (Cries of "shame," "shame" from Opposition Benches.) Now, Sir, credit may now be sought to be taken for having raised the scale of diet allowance in jails. Well, the answer is that all over India the scale has been raised because of the abnormal sky-rocketting prices which prevail today in the different provinces of India, particularly in Bengal. No credit is due to this Ministry for having done the barest act of justice when the purchasing power of money has gone down a hundred times, or even three hundred or four hundred times. Is that a matter of credit for this Ministry for having done which was so obvious to be done in circumstances such as those prevailing today?

Then, Sir, with regard to release, look round and see what is happening in other provinces of India including the provinces which are administered under section 93. Releases are taking place there in much larger numbers than can stand to the credit of the present Ministry. The paltry number of 110 is all that they can boast of. The programme of the Ministry which has been trotted out before us by Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi is a document of calculated hypocrisy designed for the purpose of roping and netting in some Caste Hindu members of this House in order to enable a Muslim League Ministry to be installed in Bengal. Some of these Caste Hindu members were looking for some pretence or pretext to break away from their parties to take shelter under the protecting wings of a Muslim League Ministry, and in order to give them some chance a camouflage document was put forward as a programme and nothing else. (Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: Ho! ho!) I know the gentleman who howls from that corner, one whose voice had been choked and gagged by the previous Ministry when Sir Nazimuddin was the Home Minister. It was by the last Ministry that the gag was removed and he was allowed to speak again as a free man.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr. Basu, do not listen to that shout.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Very well, Sir, I shall obey your ruling and accept your advice and will not listen to it. I know how hollow, how unmeaning that shout is. That is the reason for that programme, and the hypocrisy of that programme has been exposed in all its luridness by the actual effect which has been given to that programme. About three months have passed and all that this Ministry can boast of is the release of 110 prisoners when the last Home Minister, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, had already decided and passed orders for the release of 500 prisoners. Not one-fifth of them has seen the free light of the day or breathed the free air of the atmosphere. They are still pining away behind the prison bar. And what is more that lies to the discredit of this Ministry? It is the resuscitation of the old rusty weapon of Regulation III of 1818. Persons who have been released by the judicial pronouncements of the highest court in the province have been locked in again under Regulation III of 1818. Each individual Minister ought to hang down his head in shame for having tarred the fair name of Bengal and for having blackened her face with ignominy and shame by taking recourse to Regulation III of 1818 in respect of men

who have been declared free by the highest tribunal in the province. And even then they can come forward and put forward a man like Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi who with venom in his cheek and poison in his tongue flings abuses against the last Ministry. I submit, Sir, that the record that this Ministry can boast of is a large-scale assault on political prisoners in the Presidency Jail immediately on their assumption of office and the suspension of all amenities including interviews with relatives for a period of one month or more. This is their record. They ought to be ashamed of this record instead of boasting of it. Well, Sir, I know that they have got to obey their masters in the Secretariat and in Clive Street. The masters have already raised their voice even on the floor of the House today. That voice raised from the European Group will alone prevail and is bound to prevail in the counsels of the Ministry. (Applause from the Opposition Benches.)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, I also want to speak.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: My difficulty is this. I have got slips from the leaders of various groups, namely, the Nationalist Group, the Progressive Party and particularly the Leader of the Opposition wants to speak. Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy wants to speak and the Chief Whip of the Congress Party Mr. J. C. Gupta also wants to speak, but the time at my disposal is very short. So I have chosen that the Leader of the House will speak and if Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy so chooses so that he takes upon himself the right of reply of the mover he can do so after Sir Nazimuddin has finished his speech. I am sorry I have no time at my disposal.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: You will surely allow somebody from our party to speak.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have no time. I do not hold myself responsible for the time. It is very late now. Mr. Basu ought to have been allowed 15 minutes' time to speak, but I gave him only nine minutes.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: May I submit, Sir, that when so many important points have been raised, it is necessary that you should give an opportunity to the representatives of different groups and parties to express their views on this very important question and if it is not possible to conclude the debate today let the debate be carried over to another date. I would appeal to the Chief Minister to give another non-official day to discuss this question. There is ample precedent for that. It has been done in many cases.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The difficulty is that there is no other non-official day in the present list of business. Let us hear Sir Nazimuddin, the Leader of the House.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I have a word to say? It is true that the list of business as at present arranged does not provide for an extra day for non-official resolutions, but there have been instances not one or two but several in which Government has accommodated the Assembly to have debates which were not finished on the dates fixed by reason of the fact

that the debates related to a subject of very great importance. There cannot be the slightest doubt that this question of release of political prisoners is of very great importance in view of certain facts that the Leader of the European Party has himself referred to. While, on the one hand, you cannot be lax, at the same time it is necessary that Government should take note of the changed conditions in order to introduce change in policy. Besides, Sir, you will have noticed that in the course of the speech various allegations have been made, personal attacks have been made even on the floor of the House which we can ignore but points have been raised which require clarification, and it would be extremely regrettable if you allow this debate to come to a close simply for the reason that there is no other non-official day given by Government. If Government are not prepared to give us any other day we will have only ourselves to thank because Government is not sympathetic. We have not got any power to force the Government. We will then depend upon the good grace of Government to give us another day to continue the debate, but it will be sheer cruelty to keep us here till about midnight in order to complete this debate. Therefore my humble submission is: carry on to any reasonable length of time you like but if you cannot close the debate let it stand over and it is for Government to decide whether they will give us another day or not

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I quite realise your point. In that case, I would ask Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy to speak.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Before I begin, Sir, may I know how much time you are prepared to give me.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Five minutes.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Then I am sorry I do not want to speak.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as Government are concerned, Sir, they are very anxious to have the verdict of the House on the policy and programme for the release of prisoners which was enunciated by them at the time of their assumption of office and which is practically incorporated in the amendment that has been moved. Sir, we want the verdict of the House. At the same time, I think it can be done if the Leader of the Congress Party, Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy speaks first, then the Leader of the Opposition and then I can speak. Thus we will be able to finish the debate at quarter past eight. (Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: No, no.) Sir, the debate has reached a stage when only Leaders of Parties should speak.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Sir, there are various other parties, namely, the Progressive Party, etc., and members belonging to those also would like to speak. You have got to take into consideration their cases also. (Laughter from the Coalition Party Benches.) Don't laugh.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I point out, Sir, that today is a very auspicious day for marriages and we have to attend about half a dozen marriage ceremonies today. (Laughter.)

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have explained my difficulty. Not only myself but Mr. Speaker decided that the debate should be closed at 7-30 p.m. I agree with him. So I want that the House should at least know the Government's viewpoint through the Leader of the House, but I also realise that at least the Leaders of Parties should speak. There are precedents when a non-official day has been carried over to the next day. Even during the last session it was done. Under the circumstances, I have no other course but to adjourn the House, because if I adjourn the House for prayer now I will have to come again and continue. It is impossible for me to carry on in this way.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Before you give your verdict, Sir, it should be clearly understood that there is no likelihood of another non-official day being given. Sir, if the House is anxious to hear the Government point of view on the question of release of political prisoners then I submit, Sir, that this should be done today. There is no chance or likelihood as we see at present according to the business that has been arranged that there will be a sitting of the House on Friday. We have given three days for non-official discussion of the food problem, namely, 12th, 13th and 14th July—Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and Government will recommend to the Governor to prorogue the House on that day. (Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Have it on Thursday.) Sir, Government is anxious to have the verdict of the House on this question. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: There must be reasonable debate. Even the leaders have not been able to speak.) One single question is being discussed for the last three hours. Then, Government cannot be held responshible.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will also realize that it is extremely unfair if the Leader of the Opposition is not given an opportunity to speak and if the leaders of different groups are not given an opportunity to speak. I may also say that the Chief Whip of Government wanted to have the debate closed at 7-30 p.m. So, I very carefully arranged everything, but unfortunately the debate went on. I am helpless. I therefore adjourn the House till 4-30 p.m. on Monday, the 12th July, 1943.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 7-30 p.m. till 4-30 p.m. on Monday, the 12th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 12th July, 1943, at 4-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 12 Hon'ble Ministers and 191 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Home Guards.

***50. Sreejut NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Civil Defence) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) what are the duties and functions of the Home Guards;

(*ii*) what is their relation to the Police and to the Executive;

(*iii*) whether they are supplied with badges and uniforms; if not, why not;

(*iv*) whether the Bengal Government bear the expenses for maintaining them; and

(*v*) whether they have any official status; if so, of what nature?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of paying any allowances to trained Home Guard captains?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) (*i*) to (*iv*) The honourable member is referred to—

(*i*) the answer given on the 22nd September, 1942, in reply to starred question No. 46 asked by Mr. Abdulla-al-Mahmood;

(*ii*) the Press-note, dated the 29th April, 1942, a copy of which is laid on the Library Table;

(*iii*) the late Hon'ble Chief Minister's speech at the commencement of the last session which will be found at pages 42-43 of the Assembly Proceedings, Volume LXIII, No. 1;

(*iv*) a statement of progress on Home Guards published in the *Bengal Weekly*, dated the 15th February, 1943 (copy placed on the Library Table).

(*v*) They have no official status except that they are recognised by and under the control of Government through its officers.

(*b*) No; but grants are being paid to parties as a whole for good work.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the policies on which the stated Home Guards were organised and whether the revised policy for reorganisation of the Home Guards has been given effect to?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The policy has already been outlined by the then Chief Minister.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if there has been under consideration any revision of the old policy of Home Guards organisation in the province?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: Government are considering it.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long that revision of Home Guards policy has been under the consideration of Government?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The present Ministry came into office only the other day, and the revision of the policy is now under their consideration.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Home Guards are under the control of the Superintendent of Police or independent of him?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The Home Guards are under the administrative control of the District Magistrates and the Subdivisional Officers, and operational control of the Superintendents of Police.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Provincial Organisation of Home Guards is still under Mr. Buchanon?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: No, it is not under the control of Mr. Buchanon, but he sometimes advises Government on matters connected with Home Guards organisation and the training of Officers of Home Guards.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what happened to the proposal for having Mr Buchanon as the Provincial Officer in charge of the Home Guards organisation as a whole?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: I want notice.

Security prisoner Sj. Nripati Bhusan Chatterjee.

*51. **Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether Sj. Nripati Bhushan Chatterjee, a security prisoner now in the Midnapore Jail, was transferred from the Presidency Jail under punishment?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(1) the nature of punishment; and

(2) the reason for such punishment?

(c) Is it a fact—

(i) that the said security prisoner demanded *khadi* cloths of 46 inches width;

(ii) that the jail authorities of the Presidency Jail refused to supply such cloth to him; and

(iii) that *khadi* cloths of 46 inches width were later on supplied to other security prisoners in the Presidency Jail?

(d) If the answer to (c) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for refusal as referred to in (c) (ii)?

(e) Is it a fact that the above mentioned security prisoner was called to jail office while in the Presidency Jail?

(f) If so, for what reasons?

(g) If the answers to (e) and (e) are in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister consider it desirable to enquire into the matter and take necessary steps?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes.

(d) He was refused *khadi* cloth of 46 inches width by the Superintendent of the Presidency Jail as proper sanction was not obtained from Government at the time.

(e) and (f) I am unable to supply these informations as no record is kept of such calls.

(g) I do not consider it necessary to hold any enquiry into the matter.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Does the Hon'ble Minister know that there is a definite rule for supplying *khaddar* to security prisoners if *khaddar* can be purchased at the prices prescribed for purchasing mill cloths? And still why was *khaddar* refused to the prisoner?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I would refer the honourable member to my answer (d). There he will find the reason as to why *khaddar* was refused: at that time proper sanction of Government had not been obtained for supplying *khaddar* with 46 inches width.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (a)(i), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why was Sj. Nripati Bhusan Chatterjee transferred from the Presidency Jail to the Midnapore Jail?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I want notice.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he was transferred alone or along with any others?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I want notice.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: My definite information is that he was transferred to the Midnapore Jail under punishment. In view of that fact, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how he came to obtain the

information that the security prisoner Mr. Nripati Bhusan Chatterjee was not transferred by way of punishment to Midnapore Jail?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I may remind the honourable member that the occurrence took place at a time when we were not in office; and this is the information that has been supplied to us.

Nomination of Scheduled Caste candidates in Union Boards in Dacca district.

***52. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(*i*) that a large number of Caste Hindus have been elected in the Union Boards of Rajanagar, Sekharnagar, Keyain and Bashail under Munshiganj subdivision in the district of Dacca in 1942 and 1943 in excess of their population strength;

(*ii*) that the local authority has given nomination of Caste Hindu members superseding the claims of the Scheduled Castes; and

(*iii*) that the population of the Scheduled Castes is numerically much greater than that of the Caste Hindus in those Unions?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) (*i*) I understand that this has happened only in the case of the Sekharnagar Union Board.

(*ii*) and (*b*) Nominations have been given to Caste Hindu members in the Sekharnagar Union Board only as no good Scheduled Caste candidate was available.

(*a*) (*iii*) This is so in the Sekharnagar Union only. In Keyain Union, it is almost equal and in others less.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the requisite qualification of a candidate for nomination to a union board?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: No such qualification is prescribed. Only he should be a voter and that is all.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether we are to understand that there was no scheduled caste voters in that union board?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: All the voters cannot be suitable persons to be nominated.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: What is considered as the suitability of a candidate for nomination?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: It depends mostly on the discretion of the officers who recommend.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do I understand the Parliamentary Secretary to say that not one scheduled caste member as good as the one or ones elected was to be found in the whole union?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: It is reported by the local officer that no suitable scheduled caste person was available.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do I understand that the Government accept the opinion of the local officer?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: At least the then Government accepted the recommendation.

Mr. Atul Chandra Sen: Was any reference made to the honourable member representing the General constituency of that subdivision in this House?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I think the late Government might have referred to him.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state the respective number of those union boards in which scheduled castes reside?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I want notice.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what is the requisite qualification for a member to be nominated?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: That question has already been answered.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: What is the idea of putting the adjective no good scheduled caste candidate?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Water-supply and sanitary arrangements in the cyclone-affected parts of Midnapore.

*53. **Mr. KRISHNA PRASAD MANDAL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of villages swept away in the Midnapore district by tidal waves in the last cyclone;

(*ii*) what are the present number of tube-wells in the said area; and

(*iii*) the number of them that were newly installed with dates?

(*b*) Is it a fact that for four months there were no tube-wells in that area?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the total number of deaths in the cyclone-affected area due to outbreak of stomach diseases in—

(1) Contai police-station;
(2) Kedgiri police-station; and
(3) Ramnagar police-station?

(*d*) Is it a fact that the Public Health Department has taken over charge of health matters of the said area from the District Board of Midnapore?

(*e*) If the answer to (*d*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) (*i*) Contai—364 villages (partly). Tamluk—422 villages.

(*ii*) Contai—352 tube-wells approximately including private ones.

Tamluk—72 tube-wells including the new installations.

(*iii*) Contai—20 new tube-wells have been installed including 2 reservoirs during the period from the 27th October, 1942, to 10th March, 1943.

Tamluk—6 new tube-wells between 5th February, 1943, to 25th February, 1943.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*d*) and (*e*) The Contai and Tamluk subdivisions were threatened with an outbreak of cholera and other dangerous diseases in the wake of the last cyclone. The ordinary provisions of law were found insufficient for the purpose of preventing the outbreak of such diseases or spread thereof. The Director of Public Health, Bengal, was therefore empowered under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, to take such measures for the prevention and control of those epidemic diseases as he considered necessary.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (c) of starred question No. 53.

	Contai police-station.		Kedgiri police-station.		Ramnagar police-station.	
	Attacks.	Deaths.	Attacks.	Deaths.	Attacks.	Deaths.
Cholera ..	405	238	450	219	219	145
Diarrhœa ..	1,028	..	753	..	161	..
Dysentery ..	777	..	383	..	105	..

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether the area in question went without tubewells for any length of time?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Yes, for some time it went without tubewells.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: May we know, how long?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: For about 4 months. Materials were sent in due time in the month of November, and the tubewells were sunk at the earliest opportunity when contractors were available.

Mr. DEBENDRA LALL KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state how many tube-wells had gone out of order and no repair has been done?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I want notice about the number of tubewells.

Malaria and kala-azar epidemic in the Kishoreganj subdivision.

***54. Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether he is aware that malarial fever and kala-azar broke out in epidemic form in the district of Mymensingh, particularly in the subdivision of Kishoreganj, this year resulting in thousands of deaths therefrom?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any quinine or medical officers were despatched to the affected areas at Kishoreganj?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that no quinine was available in these areas even on Rs.250 a pound?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing separately from July, 1942, to December, 1942:—

(*i*) the number of deaths from (1) malaria and (2) kala-azar; and

(*ii*) the number attacked with these fell diseases in police-stations (1) Larail, (2) Karimganj, (3) Pakundia, (4) Kathiady, (5) Hossainpur, and (6) Bajitpur in Kishoreganj subdivision?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of quinine distributed from the Charitable Dispensaries at Karimganj, Pakundia, Kathiady, Sararchar Masua, Banagram, Hossainpur and Bajitpur?

(*f*) Will the Hon'ble Minister also be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing separately and month by month from July, 1942, to December, 1942, the allotment of quinine in each of the dispensaries mentioned in (*e*)?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED (on behalf of the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Twenty-seven medical officers were deputed to the affected areas of Kishoreganj subdivision and 92 lbs. of quinine were distributed.

(*c*) Quinine was scarce in the market, but the maximum price (in the local market) per pound was about Rs.140.

(*d*) Two statements are laid on the Table.

(*e*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*f*) Quinine is supplied in lump quantities according to necessity and no monthly allotment is made.

Statement I referred to in reply to clause (d) of starred question No. 54.

Statement showing the number of deaths from malaria and kala-azar from July to December, 1942, in Kishoreganj subdivision of the Mymensingh district.

Name of police station.	July.		August.		September.		October.		November.		December.	
	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.
Tarail ..	97	1	133	2	211	..	227	..	442	1	1,130	1
Hossainpur ..	..	..	21	..	4	..	..	..	25	2	38	..
Karimganj ..	48	12	57	8	77	9	112	8	427	8	903	6
Bajitpur ..	9	..	19	1	16	..	43	1	38	..	86	..
Kathiadi ..	37	..	41	1	31	..	60	..	49	..	142	..
Pakundia ..	28	2	40	1	62	..	60	1	115	1	141	1

Statement II referred to in reply to clause (d) of starred question No. 54.

Statement showing the number of attacks from malaria and kala-azar from July to December, 1942.

Name of police-station.	July.		August.		September.		October.		November.		December.	
	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.	M.	K.-A.
Tarail ..	550	4	1,240	3	1,336	1	1,700	2	1,560	1	603	1
Karimganj ..	492	..	355	5	240	3	518	2	992	2	866	..
Pakundia ..	793	19	472	13	413	12	494	26	712	20	697	15
Kathiadi ..	605	4	782	7	776	12	1,107	9	1,692	6	1,791	8
Hussainpur ..	536	14	507	8	389	17	405	10	563	9	458	9
Bajitpur ..	651	6	264	5	125	8	130	7	240	10	141	6

Statement referred to in reply to clause (e) of starred question No. 54.

Statement showing the quantity of quinine distributed from the Charitable Dispensaries.

		Lbs.
1.	Karimganj Charitable Dispensary	14
2.	Pakundia Charitable Dispensary	11
3.	Kathiadi Charitable Dispensary	11
4.	Sararchar Charitable Dispensary	21
5.	Masua Charitable Dispensary	18
6.	Banagram Charitable Dispensary	25
7.	Hossainpur Charitable Dispensary	10
8.	Bajitpur Charitable Dispensary	12

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state how many doctors were sent to Tarail, Karimganj and Kathiady police-station in the month of November?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state for how many patients, according to medical rules, 92 lbs. of quinine are required?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: That was not supplied on the basis of the number of patients. As much quinine as was available was supplied to that area.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: What is the minimum requirement of an individual patient?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: That I cannot say.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state in what month the 92 lbs. of quinine were supplied?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: From July to December.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state on what basis they came to the figure of 92 lbs. and not more?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: 92 lbs. were available to be supplied to that area.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if it is a fact that the local Public Health Department, I mean the District Public Health Officer, reported that 92 lbs. were not sufficient for the whole area?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Yes.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Then what steps Government took to supply more quinine?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Government did its best to supply more quinine.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government tried to replace that by cinchona?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: That I cannot say offhand.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether along with the 27 doctors sufficient amount of quinine was also sent or all the doctors were sent without any quinine whatsoever?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: The doctors were sent with quinine.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state how many pounds of quinine were given to each doctor?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: It appears from the statement to answer (*d*) that the death-rate in Tarail itself rose from 97 in the month of July to 1,130 in the month of December, in Kathiadi from 37 it rose to 142 and in Karimganj it rose from 48 to 903. Each month the death-rate increased by geometrical progression. Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what special step Government took to prevent the outbreak of malaria and kala-azar in this area?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: No special measures were taken except sending of quinine along with doctors.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether this quinine was distributed through charitable dispensaries or this was sent with doctors who were deputed by Government?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: This was done both through charitable dispensaries as well as by doctors.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: What is the condition in that area this July?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Comparatively better.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state what was their agency for collecting the figures of death-rate and attacks from malaria and kala-azar?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: District Magistrate.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he is aware of the fact that in one particular village of Tarail police-station, the death-rate was 1,000 from malaria alone within three months?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether, in view of the acute outbreak and high death-rate in this particular area, Government will consider the desirability of sending quinine in sufficient quantity now?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Government will look into it.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Government have sent nothing this year.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: They are sending quinine and they will also try to send more quinine.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether they have distributed quinine through the Circle Officer or through the charitable dispensary?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Through the charitable dispensary and through the Sanitary Inspector.

Point of Order.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. I am afraid the practice of two members of the Government Party exchanging questions and counter-questions and answers and counter-answers is becoming rather too common in this House We do not want to stand in the way of members exercising their private rights, but it is one of the Parliamentary practices for party members in the Government to elicit further information, if they so like, direct from the Government, because they are there, and it would be a good practice, Sir, at least for such members not to put a number of supplementary questions in the House.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: As far as the Parliamentary practice goes, it is the right of any member to put questions. As far as questions are concerned, there is no distinction between an Opposition member and a Government party member. This is the best way of receiving information.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am afraid I might have been misunderstood, Sir.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: May I submit, Sir,—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. He says he is misunderstood. Let him be understood first.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have not said it is against our rules, nor have I suggested that a private member has not got any right. I have only raised a question of propriety following the convention that you will notice is recognised in the House of Commons. I did not name the House of Commons, I did not quote the rule, because that would look as if we are always trying to look up for direction from that step-mother of Parliaments, but what I submit is this, it is a question of propriety. It looks really very

awkward if two members of the same bench would exchange their ideas and questions are mutually asked and answered when they have other machinery to get the information more readily and quickly.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: We have found in this House that Speaker has always given preference to the Opposition. This session you have always given sufficient time to the Opposition and the Oppositionists have been mostly in favour of asking supplementary questions.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: There is no objection to any supplementary question being put by members belonging to the Ministerialist Party. There cannot possibly be any such objection. But for the last few days we have been feeling that questions which are put to those Parliamentary Secretaries who are sitting close by the members belonging to the Ministerialist Party do not at all reach this side of the House. The simple solution seems to be this that if those questions are addressed to you as Speaker as they ought to be, everybody can hear the questions and the Parliamentary Secretary can also answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think this is a point of order strictly speaking. As to what has fallen from Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu his complaint is that the questions have not been addressed to the Chair and that they have not got the benefit of hearing the questions and answers. Well, this a matter which, I think, does not require any more solution than this that henceforth the honourable members asking questions will perhaps be well-advised to speak a little louder and answers will be given more loudly. This solves that part of the question.

As regards the other part raised by my honourable friend, Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal, he has conceded that the members of the Government party have got as much right to put supplementary questions and exactly in the same way as the members of the Opposition. But what he seems to object to is this that perhaps too many questions are being asked in a way which is not quite proper. That is a matter entirely for the Chair to decide whether the right to put supplementary questions is being abused or not. If the Chair feels that the right is being abused, certainly the Chair will interfere in the matter. That is all that I have got to say.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: We find that Dr. Sanyal puts more questions and cross-questions than anybody else.

Further Supplementaries to Starred Question No. 54.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any difficulty in supplying quinine monthly and not in a lump as has been done in the past?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: As I have already answered, quinine is scarcely available in the market. It is not possible to make any monthly allotment.

Representation of the people of Kachua in Tippera for opening a Registration Office.

***55. Maulvi JONAB ALI MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of deeds executed by the people of Kachua thana in the district of Tippera during the last four years (1939 to 1942); and

(*ii*) whether the Inspector-General of Registration has received any representation from the local people of the said thana for opening of a registration office there?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action has been taken on the said petition?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) (*i*) A statement furnishing the required particulars is laid on the Table.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) Government have sanctioned the establishment of a Sub-Registry Office at Kachua with effect from the 1st July, 1943.

Statement referred to in reply to clause (a) of starred question No. 55.

Number of documents registered from Kachua thana during the years:—

	1939.	1940.	1941.	1942.
Laksam	5	8	38	28
Hajiganj	3,515	4,695	5,347	5,936
Chitoshi	52	95	83	104
Chandina	558	394	507	547
Total ..	4,130	5,192	5,975	6,615

Distress in certain thanas of Rangpur district.

***56. Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether acute distress is prevailing in police-stations Shaghatta, Fulchari, Gaibandha, Sunderganj and Gobindaganj in the district of Rangpur; and

(*ii*) whether half the population of the said area, mostly small farmers and agricultural labourers, have fallen a prey to starvation?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate to start relief work in those areas?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*) (*i*) Distress is prevailing in parts of these police-stations but it has not reached an acute stage.

(*ii*) There is no starvation although small cultivators and landless labourers are passing through a difficult time.

(*b*) Agricultural loan to the extent of Rs.74,805 has been distributed in the affected areas as detailed below—

Name of police-station.		Amount distributed.
Shaghata	...	30,366
Fulchari	...	15,735
Gobindaganj	...	8,677
Gaibandha	...	8,636
Sunderganj	...	11,391
Total	...	74,805

Test relief works were started at two places in Sunderganj and Gobindaganj thanas but had to be stopped as the works did not attract a sufficient number of persons.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*a*) (*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the Government's measure of acuteness?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It has been decided in various ways, namely, price of rice in the markets, attendance in the test relief centres and other things as laid down in the Famine Code.

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the work did not attract sufficient persons because of the rates prescribed which were grotesquely low and not at all in keeping with the high price?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: For the information of the honourable member I may say that the rate was fixed according to the Famine Code, namely, market price of rice now prevailing in that locality.

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the specific rate prescribed for that area when the test relief work was started?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It is not possible for me to say accurately. So far as I remember, the rate was annas 12 *per capita*.

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the rate prescribed was annas 4 *per capita* per hundred cubit feet?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No, Sir.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: I say "Yes, Sir". I know that because I was the Chairman of the Local Board.

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It cannot be a fact because of the simple reason——

Mr. SPEAKER: You need not say that.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSH: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he ascertained the affected number of population before he allocated the amount for every police-station; and, have they come to any conclusion whatsoever as to what is the amount *per capita* that has been distributed on the basis of this sanction?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: For the information of the honourable member I am again repeating that agricultural loans are also granted according to the rules as laid down in the Famine Code.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Sir, my question has not been answered. The question was before sanctioning a particular amount for a particular police-station whether Government ascertained the number of people affected and, if so, what is the conclusion of the Government with regard to the sanctioned amount *per capita*?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Unfortunately the honourable member has not read the answer fully. The amount given there is the amount which has been actually distributed.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: I would like to draw your attention, Sir——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. He has given an answer. If you are not satisfied with it, I cannot help it.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: That is no answer, Sir.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he is aware that a large number of families and children have been compelled for want of food to leave their hearths and homes and are wandering in search of food in the border area of the neighbouring districts and are dying in large numbers from cholera and other epidemic diseases?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I do not know. We have no such information.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: In view of the information just now supplied by me, does the Hon'ble Minister think it desirable to immediately hold an enquiry into the matter?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: If specific instances are supplied by the honourable member, Government will certainly do so.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what he means by starvation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Starvation means starvation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Hon'ble Minister is called upon to give a definition of the word "starvation".

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: I want a clear answer. I cannot follow the Hon'ble Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: I disallow that question.

Mr. AHMED HOSSAIN: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the test relief works were started by the previous Ministry or the present Ministry?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Mostly by the previous Ministry. Some have also been started after the formation of the present Ministry.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that people did not go for test relief work only because the rate fixed was too low?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question has already been answered.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় কি অনুগ্রহ কোরে বোল্‌বেন —কত হাজার টাকার Test relief works আরম্ভ হোয়েছিল ?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: এর সঠিক উত্তর দিতে হোলে আমি Notice প্রার্থনা করি। তবে মোটামুটি বলা যেতে পারে যে দু লক্ষ টাকার মতন Test relief workএর জন্য sanction করা হোয়েছিল, Notice পেলে আমি ঠিক কোরে জানাতে পারবো।

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় অনুগ্রহ করে বল্‌বেন কি যে কত লোক এই Test relief এর কাজ করছে ?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: নিজের স্মৃতিশক্তি থেকে বলা শক্ত। যদি নোটিস্ দেন আমি তাহলে বল্‌তে চেষ্টা কোরব।

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Mr. Speaker Sir, আমি আমার প্রশ্নের জবাব পাই নাই।

Mr. SPEAKER: আপনার প্রশ্নের ঠিকমত উত্তর পেতে হলে নোটিস্ দিতে হবে।

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: এই সামান্য প্রশ্নের জবাবের জন্য আবার নোটিস ? মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় অনুগ্রহ করে বল্‌বেন কি রংপুর জেলায় বর্ত্তমানে চালের দর কত ?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: এ প্রশ্নের উত্তর আমি জেনে বোলবো।

Point of Order.

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: On a point of order, Sir. Is it permissible for an honourable member to speak in Bengali if he has already given any proof of his ability to understand and express himself in English?

Mr. SPEAKER: The position is somewhat anomalous. The Act says that the language of this House will be English but it gives power to the House to make rules that those who are not acquainted or sufficiently acquainted with the English language may be permitted to speak in any other language. I think that is the provision. Now let me read the relevant section, viz., Section 85 of the Government of India Act.

"All proceedings in the Legislature of a Province shall be conducted in the English language:

Provided that the rules of procedure of the Chamber or Chambers and the rules, if any, with respect to joint sittings, shall provide for enabling persons unacquainted, or not sufficiently acquainted with the English language to use another."

Rule 9 of the Rules of Procedure made by this House is to this effect:

"If any member is unacquainted or not sufficiently acquainted with the English language the Speaker may permit him to speak in any other language."

Now the question arises when the Speaker can permit a member to speak in any other language. It means that if a member is unacquainted or not sufficiently acquainted with the English language then and then only the Speaker may permit him to speak in any other language. How will the Speaker ascertain whether a member is unacquainted or not sufficiently acquainted with the English language? It may be said that gentlemen who have got degrees of Universities are accustomed to carry on their business in English. The Speaker may well say in spite of whatever they may say "I take it that you are acquainted or sufficiently acquainted with the English language, and, therefore, I am not going to permit you to speak in Bengali;" But the English language is not the mother tongue of most of us here. Therefore it is very difficult for the Speaker to say anything when a member stands up and says that he is not sufficiently acquainted with the English language to express himself in that language even if he holds a degree of the University of Calcutta or any other foreign University. Sometimes it becomes extremely difficult for gentlemen to express themselves in another language, however proficient they may be, in that language and they will be able to express themselves better in their own mother tongue. Therefore, what I propose to do in a matter like this is that whenever any member of this House stands up and says that he claims that he is not sufficiently acquainted with the English language to express himself in that language I would accept his statement and allow him to speak in Bengali.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়—আমি এসম্বন্ধে একটা কথা বোলতে চাই—

Mr. SPEAKER: I have given my decision. Have you got anything to say further?

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: আমি এ সম্বন্ধে একটা কথা আপনাদের স্মরণ করিয়া দিতে চাই, সভাপতি মহাশয়, ১৯৩৫ সনের ভারত শাসন আইন প্রবর্ত্তন হওয়ার সময় এ সম্বন্ধে মহাত্মা গান্ধিকে জিজ্ঞাসা করা হোয়েছিল, এবং তিনি স্পষ্ট ভাষায় বোলেছিলেন "প্রত্যেক ভারতবাসী একথা বোলতে পারে আমার নিজের ভাষার মতন আমি আর কোন ভাষাতেই অভিজ্ঞ নই"।

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. There are many difficulties in the way. It is not for me standing here to say that we are strangers in our own home. We realise it at every step. But here the Act has definitely provided that the language of this House shall be English. We cannot go beyond that. The only discretion that has been vested in this House is to make rules and rule has been made authorising the Speaker to permit members who are either unacquainted or not sufficiently acquainted, with the English language to speak in any other language Well, I would accept the statement of any member of this House who comes forward and says that he is not sufficiently acquainted to express himself in English but of course at the same time I believe that no member will make a statement which will be on the very face of it, unacceptable I can certainly leave it to the good sense of the members.

Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: On a point of information, Sir, অনেক সময় বক্তৃতা এবং question করবার বেলায় যে সমস্ত member ইংরাজীতে question করেন কিম্বা বক্তৃতা করেন আপনি যদি দেখেন যে তাঁরা correct কিম্বা ভালো ভাষায় ব্যক্ত কোরতে পারছেন না, তবে কি ধোরে নেবেন তাঁরা sufficiently সেই ভাষায় ব্যুৎপন্ন নন এবং তাঁদের বাংলায় বলাই ঠিক হবে?

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already stated that I will accept the statement of members of this House whenever they say that they are not sufficiently acquainted with English to speak in that language. Therefore no such question arises.

Mr. K. NOORUDDIN: Will you allow then, Sir, to speak in Bengali if they desire to do so even when they are sufficiently acquainted with English?

Mr. SPEAKER: Certainly, because sometimes it might have so happened that members spoke in English under a misapprehension.

(At this stage some members were on their legs to speak.)

Order, order. Already there has been enough of discussion on this question and I think there ought not to be any more.

Further Supplementaries to Starred Question No. 56.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় এপর্য্যন্ত যেসব প্রশ্নের জবাব দিয়েছেন তাতে তিনি বোলেছেন যে কত লোক Test reliefএর কাজ কোরেছে, বা কত টাকা তাতে খরচ হোয়েছে তা কিছুই তিনি অবগত নন। তিনি কি অনুগ্রহ কোরে বোলবেন যে সেখানে starvation নাই?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Shall I answer in Bengali or English?

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot say whether you can speak in English or you cannot speak in English. The main question being in English you have answered in English though the member may be quite innocent of English and may not understand it at all. But it is certainly open to you to speak either in English or in Bengali now when the supplementary question has been put in Bengali.

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: The other day you were pleased to rule, when a question was put in Bengali, that in answering question put in Bengali it would be desirable to answer in Bengali and I want to answer in Bengali.

বাংলা দেশে একসঙ্গে ২৫টি জেলায় এই কাজ চোলেছে। সুতরাং কোন্ জেলায়, কোন্ subdivisionএ কোন সময়ে কত লোক কাজ কোরেছে তা এখানে ঠিক কোরে বলা সম্ভব নয়।

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: আমার প্রশ্ন তা নয়। আমার প্রশ্নটা সোজা; এক মাত্র রংপুর জেলা সম্বন্ধে, সেখানকার Test relief workএ কত টাকা খরচ হোয়েছে বা কত লোক সেই কাজে নিযুক্ত হোয়েছে উনি জানেন না, বোলছেন।

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Will you please put your question direct without any introductory note or any discussion?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, আমার প্রশ্ন হোলো—মন্ত্রী মহাশয় যে বোলেছেন সেখানে starvation নাই, সেই সঙ্গে তিনি বোলেছেন—কত লোক Test reliefএ কাজ করেছে বা কত টাকা তাতে খরচ হয়েছে তিনি তা অবগত নন, তিনি যখন সেখানকার কোন কিছুই জানেন না অথচ সেখানে যে starvation নাই—এ উত্তরটা কি করে তাঁর মুখ থেকে বেরুতে পারে?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no question.

Mr. AHMAD HOSSAIN: With reference to answer (a)(*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether mass starvation amongst small agriculturists and labourers in the months of Chaitra and Baisakh had taken place?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়, অনুগ্রহ কোরে বোলবেন কি—রংপুর জেলায় বর্ত্তমানে চালের দর কত?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: এ প্রশ্নের উত্তর আমি জেনে বোলবো।

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: আমার আরো জিজ্ঞাস্য আছে Sir, উনি যে বোলছেন জেনে বোলবেন—

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Roy, you need not discuss but you put the question direct.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: মন্ত্রী মহাশয় রংপুরে বর্ত্তমানে চালের দর জানেন না, কত লোক Test reliefএ সেখানে কাজ কোরেছে জানেন না। এবং কত টাকাই বা ঐ বাবদ খরচ হোয়েছে তাও জানেন না, তবে তাঁর উক্তির starvation নাই কথাটার অর্থ কি ?

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not allow that question.

Babu KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that since the drafting of this reply the condition of Rangpur, more specially of the Nilphamari subdivision, has gone far worse and people there are very adversely affected, if not by lakhs, at least by thousands and some of them have already died and others are dying for want of food?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I cannot answer that question off-hand.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Family allowance to security prisoner Mr. Hari Mohan Poddar.

24. Mr. MAQBUL HOSAIN: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department aware of the fact—

(*i*) that Mr. Hari Mohan Poddar, son of Iswar Chandra Poddar, of Brahmanbaria, Madhyapara, in the district of Tippera, was arrested under rule 129 of the Defence of India Rules in the year 1942 and detained in the Comilla Jail since his arrest;

(*ii*) that he was the sole earning member of his family; and

(*iii*) that his widowed mother submitted three petitions to the District Magistrate of Tippera, for family allowance as they are in distress?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting him any family allowance?

(*c*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) He has other brothers capable of earning.

(*iii*) I have no information about his mother's petitions to the District Magistrate, Tippera, but one petition from the security prisoner has been received.

(*b*) and (*c*) An allowance of Rs.15 per mensem has been granted to the mother of the security prisoner from the 1st October, 1942.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: With reference to answer (*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the date when the application was received and the date when the allowance was granted?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*ii*), namely, that the security prisoner has other brothers capable of earning, may I enquire whether in estimating the earning—whether allowance will at all be granted or not—the present Ministry is examining the possibility of some member of the family earning, whether there is actual earning therefrom or not: that is whether the capacity to earn is one of the factors that are examined or whether the actual earning is examined?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: My attention has only just now been drawn to this aspect of the question. I propose in future only to take into consideration the actual earning of the family.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell the House the number of dependents of this security prisoner?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: He has more than one brother capable of earning.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Sir, I want to know the number of his dependents.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I do not think he has got any wife because allowance has been granted to the mother only. So it is obvious that he has no wife.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: With reference to answer (*a*)(*iii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is the duty of the District Magistrate to whom applications for family allowance are submitted to forward those applications to the Government with his recommendation?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I think this is the practice at present.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he considers the desirability of issuing instruction to the District Magistrate to submit his report within a short time as may be prescribed by the Government so that applications can be disposed of quickly instead of waiting for three months?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I do not think it is possible to prescribe a time limit because it usually takes a long time to get full information about a family.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that several petitions are awaiting the decision of the Government for more than six months for want of report from the District authorities?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, I cannot allow that question. Instead of asking about specific cases you are bringing in general questions.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the approximate time for investigating a case and disposing of it?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It is very difficult to give the the approximate time.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: The maximum time?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I do not think it takes more than a month.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: In view of the reply just now given by the Hon'ble Minister, may I request him to enlighten us whether more than six months' time has been taken in particular cases?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I will explain the reason why delay generally takes place. Generally the delay takes place in those cases where the recommendation of the department is against the grant of an allowance and it is then sent up to the Minister for his final decision. These are the kind of cases where delay takes place.

A.R.P. appointments in Calcutta.

25. Sj. ASUTOSH MULLICK: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Defence) Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the number of wardens employed in the A.R.P. services in Calcutta before the air raids during the last Christmas; and

(*ii*) the number of such persons turning up at their posts of duty during those raids?

(*b*) Is it a fact that the A.R.P. Controller, Calcutta, has issued a circular, dated the 28th January, 1943, prohibiting the enrolment of a person on political grounds?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of memorandum No. 223(5), dated the 28th January, 1943, issued by the A.R.P. Controller, Caclutta?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*b*) The circular prohibited the recruitment of any person as a member of a political party; in particular recruitment of members of the Communist Party of India was prohibited.

(*c*) The circular was for official use only. The instructions in the circular have been modified by Government and the prohibition on the recruitment of members of the Communist Party of India has been withdrawn.

Statement referred to in clause (a) (i) and (ii) of unstarred question No. 25.

Particulars.	(i)—The number of Wardens employed in the A. R. P. Services in Calcutta before the raids during the last Christmas.		(ii)—The number of such persons turning up at their post on duty during those raids.
	Paid.	Unpaid.	
Number of Wardens recruited on the 14th December, 1942.	3,283	1,248	
Attendance of Wardens on the days the sirens were sounded in the month of December, 1942 on—			Absent.
20-12-42			817
22-12-42			828
23-12-42			791
24-12-42			761
28-12-42			788

	Paid Wardens	Absent. With leave.	Absent. Without leave.
20th December, 1942	3,073	96	120
22nd December, 1942	3,102	95	105
23rd December, 1942	3,099	88	110*
24th December, 1942	3,071	88	140
28th December, 1942	3,031	103	157

*The totals of these figures for each day do not tally with the figure of recruitment of paid wardens as it stood on 14th December, 1942, as since that date some fresh recruitment was made.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why in particular recruitment of members of the Communist Party of India was prohibited?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It was done on the basis that no member of a political organisation as such could be recruited to the A.R.P. but individual members of any political organisation in their individual capacity could be recruited, and as the Communist Party wanted, as far as I know,—of course this took place not in my time but during the previous Government,—to be recruited as members of the Communist Party, I believe, the restriction was placed.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if that circular No. 22305, dated the 28th January, 1943, referred to a particular application or arose out of a particular application of one individual applicant for enrolment in the Ballygunge area?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how many cases have occurred after the modification of the circular?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Obviously none.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to the statement showing that there have been during the air raids a large number of absentees without leave, will the Hon'ble Minister be pelased to state whether such

absentee members are still allowed to continue in the A.R.P. services or they have been replaced by others who are prepared to stay on during air raids?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Each case was examined and those who could not offer satisfactory explanation for their absence were removed from service and I think by now others have replaced them.

Transfer of the A.R.P. Officer of Comilla.

26. Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN (Mymensingh): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether he has received any telegram from the Secretary of the Tippera District Muslim Anjuman regarding the transfer of the Muslim A.R.P. Officer of Comilla for non-observance of the Communal Ratio Rules in the appointments in the Tippera Collectorate?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the action, if any, that has been taken thereon?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: (*a*) No.

(*b*) Does not arise.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether four Muslim A.R.P. members of Comilla resigned their posts owing to difference with the A.R.P. officer?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: May I refer the honourable member to question 26 and to the answer which has been given to (*a*)?

Mr. SHAHEDALI: My question is that 4 Muslim members of the A.R.P. have resigned owing to a difference with the A.R.P. officer who is a Hindu. My question is whether the Hon'ble Minister knows it.

Mr. SPEAKER: This is a question of transfer and not of resignation. How does that question arise?

Mr. SHAHEDALI: The question here is regarding the transfer of the Muslim A.R.P. Officer of Comilla and the Hon'ble Minister has answered "No". My question is that the A.R.P. Officer is not a Muslim officer but a Hindu officer and four Muslim members of the A.R.P. have resigned.

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make an enquiry with regard to this and other anomalies with regard to A.R.P. in Comilla?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question also does not arise.

No-confidence motion against the Chairman, Rajshahi District Board.

27. Kazi ABUL MASUD: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the official members of the Rajshahi District Board

are taking part in bringing a no-confidence motion against Maulvi Md. Maniruddin Akhand, Chairman, Rajshahi District Board?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps the Government propose to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) No official member took any part in bringing the no-confidence motion

(*b*) Does not arise.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the rights and privileges of official members of the district board are quite different from those of non-official members?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: As members they have got equal rights as non-official members

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government can take action against official members if they exercise these rights and privileges in their discretion?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: If they have taken any part in political activities, certainly Government officials would be brought to book.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any no-confidence motion was brought against the Chairman of the Rajshahi District Board?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Yes, it was tabled.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Subdivisional Officer, Natore, and the Subdivisional Officer, Rajshahi, Sadar, voted in favour of the no-confidence motion and exercised their personal influence over the members of the district board in favour of the no-confidence motion?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: There are two parts in the question. The answer to the first part is in the negative. As regards the second part I refer the honourable member to answer (*a*).

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: What was the result of the no-confidence motion?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: I am not aware of it.

Kazi ABUL MASUD: In view of the negative answer, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he will enquire into the matter and take steps if necessary.

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: If any definite charge is brought certainly Government will enquire into the matter.

Excavation of Behakair Khal in Narayanganj subdivision.

28. Mr. DHANANJOY ROY: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works (Irrigation) Department be pleased to state whether a scheme was prepared and estimated for the excavation of Behakair *khal* of mauza Behakair, No. 20, in the Kanchpur Union Board of the Narayanganj subdivision, Dacca, by the Subdivisional Officer, Irrigation, River Training Works, Dacca?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the stage at which the scheme stands at present; and

(*ii*) whether the Government are considering the desirability of taking early steps in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) The scheme was sent to the Subdivisional Officer, Narayanganj, at whose instance it was investigated and prepared, for carrying out the work with local enterprise as the cost is very small amounting to Rs.593. The Subdivisional Officer has since reported that this scheme with several others is under technical investigation, and that as soon as investigation is completed, it will be submitted to Government.

(*ii*) The question does not arise.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, with reference to answer (*b*)(*i*), what is the nature of investigation which has been called here technical?

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: As distinguished from non-technical.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: I want to know exactly what are the points that have been referred to the Subdivisional Officer for investigation in this connection.

The Hon'ble Mr. BARADA PROSANNA PAIN: Subdivisional Officer and District Magistrate have been asked to examine and send up reports about a number of schemes.

Point of Privilege.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: I rise on a point of privilege. My point of privilege is that I applied for a visitor's ticket on Friday last but no ticket has been issued. This has been not only in my case but in the case of my other friends of this House also. On the contrary 6, 7, 8 tickets have been issued in the name of members who do not belong to our party.

Mr. CIASUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, আমি শুক্রবারে যে টিকিট চেয়েছি সেই টিকিট আজও পেলাম না, অথচ আমাদের দলের অনেক বন্ধু ঐ গ্যালারীর গেটে টিকিট পাবার আশায় অপেক্ষা করছেন, তাদের কি হবে ?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will look into the matter very carefully and see that nothing wrong is done.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: The wrong has already been done.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will try to rectify it as far as possible.

Sj. NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA: We have come here to attend the session but what about the gentlemen who are standing outside the House?

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as today is concerned I think I am helpless. I will look into the matter carefully after today's work is over and I will see that nothing irregular takes place with effect from tomorrow.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Mr Speaker, there is one information which I can give you. At the time when we came to record our votes in the Public Accounts Committee today the Secretary told us that cards have been issued for applications that were received till Friday and that only on Saturday about 100 applications have been received. As regards those applications he asked "What is your opinion, Sir?" We all said "All right, cards for these may be issued for Tuesday and Wednesday." But it is funny that 7, 8 or 10 cards have been issued today in the name of certain persons and as regards the applications that were put forward on Friday no cards have been issued.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have already said that I will personally look into the matter very carefully. I think that will satisfy my friend Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed.

Application for leave of absence.

Sj. ASHUTOSH MULLICK: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do permit Mr. Radha Nath Das, a member of this House representing the Hooghly North-East (General—Scheduled Caste) Constituency, to be absent for the period from 15th September, 1942, to the 28th March, 1943, for which he finds himself unable to attend

The motion was then put and agreed to.

Point of Privilege.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: Sir, I rise on a point of privilege. I most respectfully draw your attention to the remark made by you the other day in connection with the admissibility of Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi's amendment on the resolution for release of political prisoners. You stated that you were not going to allow such amendments in future.

I would like to point out that it would be curtailing the rights and privileges of the members of this House as provided in rule 42 of the Rules of Business of this House. Under that rule any member can move any amendment which is relevant to and within the scope of the question to which it is proposed provided it has not merely the effect of a negative vote. Sir, I would also like to draw your attention to page 282 of May's Parliamentary Practice where it is stated that the object of an amendment is to effect such alteration in a question as will obtain the support of those who, without such alteration, have to vote against it or abstain from voting thereon. Amendments are also sometimes intended to evade an expression of opinion upon the main question by entirely altering its meaning and object. This is effected by moving the omission of all the words of the resolution after the word "that" at the beginning and by the substitution of other words of a different import. There are numerous precedents of dealing with a question in this way, but I would like to refer to one quoted in May's Parliamentary Practice at page 277. On the 7th May, 1802, a motion was moved in the House of Commons for an address expressing the thanks of the House to His Majesty for having been pleased to remove the Right Hon'ble W. Pitt from his Councils. An amendment upon this was proposed and carried which left out all the words after the first and substituted others in direct opposition to them by which the whole policy of Mr. Pitt was commended. In the same year an address was moved in both Houses of Parliament condemning the Treaty of Amiens. Amendments were moved in both the Houses justifying the Treaty and they were carried

Apart from the instances that I have cited of the practice that is followed in the House of Commons, I would like to state that practically in all legislatures as well as in the annual meetings of the All-India Congress Committee and the Muslim League, numerous instances can be found where amendments have been moved to resolutions omitting practically the whole and substituting it by others, and, Sir, from the example which I have cited of the House of Commons. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What book?) May's Parliamentary Practice. (Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What edition? 13th or 14th?) I don't remember it. I have not got it here. Well, Sir, from that it will be seen that there is a special rule that an amendment was practically a negation of what the proposal was, but because it was not merely a negation but asserted something positive it was accepted. So it appears that only those amendments which were mere negations in their character were ruled out of order.

I beg to submit first of all, Sir, that what happened that day was, in my opinion, merely an *obiter dictum* and not a ruling, because your ruling was in favour of what I am proposing now. Therefore I think that I should take the first opportunity to bring it to your notice so that the privileges and procedure may be as they are all over the world. And in this connection, Sir, I may say that this question affects all members of the House. The other day an amendment was moved by us, but it is quite possible that the Opposition may move a similar amendment next day and sometimes the minorities in the House are the people who move amendments. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Resolutions and not amendments.)

Mr. SPEAKER: This is perhaps a protest against what I stated in reply to a question put to me by Mr. Stark and Mr. Stark put it in this way:—

"Mr. A. F. STARK: Just one point on this point of order. If you are convinced that this is a bad precedent, Sir, would you not at once change for the future, so that it may not go out as another precedent?

Mr. SPEAKER: I will certainly look into the matter and in future I may have to revise the whole thing."

That is all that I stated in this House. I never intended to give a ruling, a general ruling covering the entire field as to what should be an amendment and what should not be an amendment. That was far from me. I am not giving any definite opinion now, but I would certainly take pretty good care to study the matter to the best of my ability and to give decisions on individual proposals which are brought forward by way of amendment. I doubt whether any definite rule can be laid down on these points, but I would certainly look into the matter as carefully as I can and I shall try to be guided by wholesome principles and also strictly according to the rules. This much I can say for the present.

Delhi Conference and Enquiry from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, before you allow the debates on the food situation to begin, may I through you enquire of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies whether he is prepared and willing to make a statement regarding what happened at Delhi at the Conference which he recently attended. The statement on the situation which was read out to the House or placed in our hands in his absence was evidently prepared before he left for Delhi.

I wish to know if the Hon'ble Minister has got any material facts to communicate to this House supplementary to what has been stated in the memorandum which has been circulated. There is another question which I wish to put and it is this Recently there has been what is popularly known as anti-hoarding drive throughout Bengal. I would like to know if the Hon'ble Minister is prepared to let us have statistics, district by disrict, as to whether there has been deficit, and, if so, to what extent whether there has been excess and, if so, to what extent and what has actually happened to the surplus stock, if any, that was acquired at any place in the course of that drive. Sir, I am putting this question in order to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the information which we want in order that we may be able to contribute something to the discussion and with a view to helping him in formulating and discussing the Government policy. Sir, it is not that we can ask it as a matter of right. I have put it whether he is prepared and willing and if he is willing it would be very useful if he were to make a statement on these two points before the debate actually begins.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I regret, Sir, that I am not prepared at this stage to satisfy the two points that have been raised by the

Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition. There has been no change in the policy of this Government owing to my attendance at the Delhi Conference, and hence any criticism or suggestion that may be made by the honourable members of the House can be made on the policy which the Government is pursuing.

As regards the statistics of the food drive, I have not got in my possession all the statistics, but the general picture which I may present to the House is this that practictlly in all the places deficits have been reported.

Mr. A K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, there is only one point which I wish to make clear. It is one thing to make any change in the policy. That I quite understand. It is well within the rights of the present Government to adhere to the policy they have laid down or to make any changes. I was only asking if the Hon'ble Minister has got any information which he can let the House know without in any way infringing any of the rules of procedure which may prevent him from imparting that information. It is information that I think we would like to have and not the conclusion of Government based on that information. Government may lay down a policy and adhere to it but after that policy has been laid down Government may come to know certain facts and it may be that those facts may not change their decision. But it is open to us to decide whether those facts should have been taken into consideration in order to introduce any change in their policy. Facts we want and, not, Sir, whether facts have influenced the Government in any particular way

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Minister appears to be unwilling to make any further statement. So let us begin (At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Special Motions.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Chaudhuri, before you move your special motion, I may tell you that I have some doubt if the whole motion as contained in the agenda paper is in order. I think the part which deals with the reasons for the failure to tackle the food situation is not in order.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, before you come to a decision will you permit me to urge my points on the question. But before doing so I should like to know whether you wish to state your objections.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Then I must sit down.

Mr. SPEAKER: What I was going to say is this.

Unfortunately this matter came in quick succession and I have not been able to go through it carefully so far as the admissibility or otherwise of the

motions is concerned. They have all been placed there subject to my decision about their admissibility in this House. Your motion stands thus: "This Assembly is of opinion, etc., etc.," and then you proceed to enumerate four reasons. It appears to me, however, that this assignment of reasons contravenes the rules. I think the rules about resolutions apply to special motions also. Rule 88 is this:—

"Subject to the provision of these rules, any member may move a resolution relating to a matter of general public interest:

Provided that no resolution shall be admissible which does not comply with the following conditions, namely:—

It shall not contain arguments, inferences"
and so forth.

I think, therefore, that it would be better if you delete that part of your motion which deals with reasons which are mere arguments that you can well advance in your discussion

I think the whole motion will be in order if it runs thus.—

"This Assembly is of opinion that the present Government has failed to tackle successfully the food situation in the province"—and then you say, "and is further of opinion that the following measures be immediately undertaken, etc., etc."

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: I bow to your ruling, Sir.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In connection with this ruling, Sir, particularly as it is likely to affect my motion as well, I have to make a submission. The word "argument" along with the two other words that follow, namely, "inferences" and "ironical expressions" indicates not the logic of a resolution but some reflective observations in the body of the resolution. You cannot possibly, Sir, think of a conclusion or an opinion of an Assembly being given without any reason and it stands therefore to reason that a resolution that is caused to be moved must have in the body of the resolution sufficient indications to help the House as well as the Government to get prepared or ready to meet such things when the special motions are to be moved. A bare motion without indication as to why the motion is sought to be moved would lead things to the dark to such an extent that it might create in future a bad precedent that would make it impossible for Government to decide as to whether such a motion should be given assent to or not. You will probably find that under rule 95(*1*), a special motion can only be moved with the consent of the Speaker and the sanction or approval of the Minister to whose department the motion relates. Unlike an adjournment motion where a brief statement of the reasons for the matter proposed to be discussed is required under the rules to be given there is no provision under rule 95(*1*) for a brief statement to be given. Therefore, if an additional provision for a brief explanatory statement is given, that will give an opportunity to you and the Minister in charge to find out what exactly the member desirous of moving the motion is driving at. It is only necessary that in the body of the motion some indication should be given as to the nature of the matter that is proposed to be taken up. I further beg to

invite your attention to the fact that in the past we had moved numerous motions of this character. We have not only moved in the form that "this Assembly is of opinion" and given reasons therefor, but we have always started like "whereas such and such has happened this House is of opinion that such and such steps must be taken." In the case of the famous resolution regarding the treatment of Indians in Burma drafted by my esteemed friend, Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, that was the form and that was approved of by your predecessor in office, Sir Azizul Haque. In the circumstances you need not be too meticulous in the interpretation of the word "argument" in admitting a resolution. Sir, it makes no difference to you or to the House but probably it helps the Government to know that these are the main lines of attack that are sought to be opened. It is rather helping the House, but if your ruling creates difficulties in future in bringing up matters before the House not quite in the dark but in full perspective of all the aspects of the question to be discussed, I submit that you would kindly allow past precedents to be retained and the motions in their present forms being allowed——

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: Sir, I beg to submit a few words on Dr. Sanyal's point of order. Dr. Sanyal thinks that it will be helpful to the House; on the other hand I think it will interfere with the expression of correct opinion by the House. In these matters, Sir, though many members of this House may find it difficult to agree to the arguments that are advanced by the mover they may agree with the text of the resolution. That is perhaps the reason why the rule says that no argument should be there in the body of the motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not called upon, I think, to give a general enunciation as to the exact form in which a resolution should be put. It appears to me that the rules are clear in excluding arguments—

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Yes, so far as resolutions are concerned, but not with regard to special motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am just coming to that. Now, therefore, it appears to me that if we allow reasons to be incorporated in the resolutions there will be no end of it. You can make it as lengthy as you like: you can incorporate the whole argument in the resolution itself. That was a thing which, I think, was never contemplated by the framers of the rules. As to the objection or as to the ground that this is a special motion and not a resolution, if you kindly turn to rule 95, you will find that it says expressly "shall take place otherwise than on a resolution moved in accordance with these rules, except with the consent of the Speaker....."

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Sir, it is in your discretion to give your consent.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think it is exactly in my discretion to do whatever I like. In order to come within section 95 I have got to see that it complies with the rules relating to resolutions as far as practicable. I

think it will be better—of course I say without committing myself to any general ruling—I think in the present case it will be better if the reasons are excluded and I rule accordingly.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sir, I bow to your ruling particularly when you permit me to introduce my reasons in my speech. The resolution that stands in my name runs thus:

This Assembly is of opinion that the present Government has failed to tackle successfully the food situation in the province and is further of opinion that the following measures be immediately undertaken to meet the aggravated situation and relieve the acute suffering of the people, viz.—

(*1*) that Bengal should be declared a famine area and Government should organise and undertake requisite food supply throughout the province accordingly;

(*2*) that all export of food-stuff from the province on any account should be completely stopped and movement of food-stuff out of deficit areas within the province be restricted;

(*3*) that negotiations with the other Provincial Governments should be immediately undertaken for importing food-stuffs from the areas administered by them by direct Government purchase;

(*4*) that Government purchase of food-stuffs from other provinces through certain favoured agents at the sacrifice of provincial funds should be abandoned;

(*5*) that adequate quantities of wheat and other food-stuff should be imported from abroad and other provinces to meet the deficits in normal requirements and provide for additional demands on account of the war situation;

(*6*) that the scheme of anti-hoarding drive should be so revised as to properly define "hoarding" and to protect the legitimate interests of growers and small consumers and not to promote hoarding by big stockists and traders; and

(*7*) that the "Grow More Food" campaign should be seriously undertaken by—

(*a*) supplying sufficient quantities of good seeds;
(*b*) providing for adequate irrigation facilities; and
(*c*) making suitable advances to cultivators for purchasing cattle and for expanding agricultural operations.

Point of order on the nature of motions in the form of no-confidence in Ministers.

Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN: On a point of order, Sir. This resolution of Mr. Rai Chaudhuri has militated against rule 102(*1*). There it is said that a motion—and a special motion comes within it—expressing want of confidence in the Council of Ministers or in a particular Minister or a motion disapproving the policy of a Minister in a particular respect may be made.

Then the procedure is laid down. That procedure has not been followed with regard to this motion and here the wording is: This Assembly is of opinion that the present Government—by the present Government it must be meant the present Ministry—has failed to tackle successfully the food situation in the Province. That means disapproving the food policy of Government in a particular respect. Therefore, I say this should have followed the procedure laid down in section 102(*1*). As that has not been done, this is out of order.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Your party moved similar motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Rai Chaudhuri, have you got anything to say with regard to this point?

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: A no-confidence motion, as contemplated in section 102, is something very different from the motion that I have tabled. Here there is an expression of opinion that Government have failed. There is no doubt about that, but at the same time there are certain constructive suggestions and Government can, of course, avoid censure by accepting those suggestions. I do not say that it is not a motion of no-confidence. Surely it is a motion of no-confidence But it cannot come under section 102 because of the fact that there are certain constructive suggestions and Government, if they are so advised, may accept them Government can accept these constructive suggestions and avoid censure if they so like. Although it contains censure in the first part of the resolution, it is not a censure motion in its latter part.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, before you give your ruling, I would invite your attention to the special motion moved by Mr Tamizuddin Khan—now Hon'ble—as reported in Assembly proceedings, pages 146-147. The wording thereof was almost exactly the same

Mr. SPEAKER: This again raises a somewhat important constitutional point and it also deals with the rights and privileges of this House. If I am to accept the contention of my honourable friend Mr. Fazlur Rahman, it will come simply to this that this House has got only one way of expressing its disapproval of the conduct or policy of the Ministry. I, being a servant of this House and the custodian of the rights and privileges of this House, will be very slow to accept an interpretation which will curtail the rights and privileges of this House. In the first place, we all know and it is a recognised and well-settled procedure that censure can be passed on the Ministry through cut motions in discussing the budget. Therefore, it is accepted that apart from the procedure prescribed in rule 102, there are other ways of expressing disapproval of the policy of the Ministry. Now, it may be said that when a specific provision has been made in the rules for censuring the Ministry, no other procedure should be resorted to. I have already stated what happens with regard to cut motions. Next, let us analyse what this rule says. The rule says this: "A motion expressing want of confidence in the Council of Ministers or in a particular Minister or a motion disapproving the policy of a Minister in a particular respect may be

made subject to the following restrictions, namely:—leave to make the motion must be asked for after questions and before the list of business for the day is entered upon; the member asking for leave must, before the commencement of the sitting of the day, leave with the Secretary a written notice of the motion which he proposes to make. If the Speaker is of opinion that the motion is in order and is not an abuse of the procedure provided in sub-rule (*1*), he shall read the motion to the Assembly and shall request those members who are in favour of leave being granted to rise in their places, and if not less than eighty members rise accordingly, the Speaker shall intimate that leave is granted and that the motion will be taken on such day, not being more than ten days from the day on which leave is asked, as he may appoint. If less than eighty members rise, the Speaker shall inform the member that he has not the leave of the Assembly." An analysis of this rule will clearly indicate that it practically dispenses with any period of notice, that it may be brought in on the very day, and it also lays down a safeguard against abuse that you cannot bring in a censure motion any day you like if you have not got the backing of at least 80 members of this House. On the one hand it dispenses with the question of timely notice; on the other hand it prescribes a rule which restricts the right to the extent that at least 80 members must rise to support the motion. Now the rule does not state that any ground whatsoever has got to be stated in the motion for no-confidence.

In the case of resolution it is quite otherwise. You have got to give notice of a certain number of days, I think it is 21 days' notice, and certain other formalities have got to be gone through I think this House never intended that the members will not have their usual remedy by resolution against Ministers. That will be curtailing the rights of this House. This rule does not restrict the rights of members of this House, but it gives an additional right over and above the right which the House may have in expressing its disapproval of the policy of Ministers. In this view, which I hold, I think this motion is perfectly in order.

Apart from this we have got precedents. Dr Sanyal has pointed out that the present motion is exactly the same as the motion of Mr. Tamizuddin Khan who was then in Opposition. That motion ran thus: "This Assembly is of opinion that Government have failed to tackle satisfactorily the problems of supply and distribution of food-stuffs, kerosene oil, and other necessities of life and is further of opinion . . . .". He then gave his constructive suggestions. I, therefore, hold that the present motion is perfectly in order.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: May I point out, Sir, in this connection that this was an amendment to the Government motion?

Mr. SPEAKER: If an amendment is permissible, certainly a motion is also permissible.

Special Motions.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in accordance with your ruling I had to omit the reasons that were given in the resolution to censure the Government and as you were pleased to permit me to incorporate those reasons in my speech, I would start with the ground which I should take in proving how the Government has failed to successfully tackle the food situation. Had the expunged portion been there, the resolution would have been self-explanatory. The first part of the resolution in that case would have contained in brief the arguments in support of my proposition that the Government has failed to tackle the food situation and the second part would only deal with the constructive suggestions which would logically follow from the first part. As much of the first part has been deleted, I have got to deal in detail with the arguments in support of my first proposition of censure on the Government.

Sir, any one who will not take leave of common sense will admit that you can cure a disease or remedy an evil only if you have a clear appreciation of the fundamental cause or causes that have given rise to it. You cannot ignore the cause and hope to remove the effect or provide for effective treatment. There is a food famine in Bengal and there has been a serious shortage in rice production in the province last year, i.e., 1942-43. The yield according to departmental calculations has been only 6,916,000 tons as against a production of 10,190,000 tons in 1941-42 Yet the present Ministry of Civil Supplies in a statement published on 4th May 1943 observed: "The Hon'ble Minister is convinced that any deficit this year can be fully met from the carry-over of 1941-42 as a result of the steps which are being taken to rationalise the consumption and to popularise the increased use of substitute food-grains as well as the reduction in consumption due to the high price level". Three factors then have gone to balance our food budget according to the Minister of Civil Supplies, namely, if we begin with the last, (*1*) less consumption due to high price which is an euphemistic way of saying that many people have gone without food or have resorted to fasting or starvation diet, (*2*) rationalisation of consumption in which must be included, in the absence of any known or definite scheme of rationalisation eating of grass and herbs by many, and (*3*) carry-over from the last year.

It is obvious that if most of the people take to prolonged fasting or eating grass as a substitute, there will be no shortage or may even be a surplus of rice now in this province, but a well-paid Minister of Civil Supplies is not required for balancing the food budget of the province in that way. As to the assertion that the carry-over from the previous year has also gone to balance the food budget, let us try to understand what could the carry-over from 1941-42 be. Now, what was the rice production in 1941-42? It was, as I have said, 10,190,000 tons. Now according to the departmental figure as given in the last session of the Bengal Legislative Council the normal provincial requirement was 92 lakhs of tons and economists hold that 10 per cent. that is 9·20 lakhs of tons have to be added to the figure for the abnormal requirements due to war and influx of refugees

and new population. There can, therefore, be insignificant or no carry-over from the production of 1941-42, particularly if we remember again that the year before, that is 1940-41, was an exceedingly bad rice year with a production of 6,043,000 tons necessitating a pretty large amount of the rice yield of 1941-42 to be carried backward to meet the prior deficit. The whole theory of carry-over from the production of 1941-42 cannot, therefore, stand serious scrutiny, and because it cannot stand any scrutiny, the fresh statistical details to demonstrate sufficiency, that the Minister promised to the Press Conference on May 8th would be shortly published, have not yet seen the light of the day and even today the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies has refused to come out with statistical details. It must be admitted therefore that there was a serious, very serious shortage in 1942-43 when the total production of rice was only 6,916,000 tons. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukherjee, not a politician but an economist, the head of the Department of Economics of Lucknow University, lately observed: "Bengal's rice production in the pre-war period averaged 10,217,000 tons. For a province that has so far depended on exports of rice from Burma, Major-General Wood (at the Press Conference held this week at Writers' Buildings) should have avoided the war years for calculating the average. Thus Bengal's average rice output is 10,217,000 tons as against the Major-General's figure of 8,181,000 tons. (The former figure was also used in the Food Production Conference in Delhi in April 1942). To this should be added her net rice imports of 200,000 tons. The current year's production in Bengal is 6,916,000 tons Thus there is net rice shortage to the extent of 3,501,000 tons to which should be added again, her normal imports of 270,000 tons of wheat and 106,000 tons of gram, excluding the present requirements of the evacuees and of the army. No province that is not self-sufficient in her food would hoard large amounts in a regime of such extraordinary high prices, as has been facilely assumed especially in view of her rice exports last year amounting to 1·54 lakh tons. A deficiency of food to the extent of 3,877,000 tons implies shortage for about 20 million mouths to feed. Bengal has now run short of food for one-third of her population. No wonder that prices are sky-rocketing". He concludes by saying that "it is not safe to take too optimistic a view of the food resources of Bengal in this crisis and stress merely the psychological factors of hoarding and holding out stocks rather than the economic factor of serious actual food shortage that has to be wiped out by food imports from the surplus provinces, and planned food drive in the province".

But Mr. Suhrawardy, we have seen, is continually harping on the supposed psychological factors ignoring the physical fact of stupendous shortage and the other physical fact of widespread starvation.

Now let us consider, how far he has been able to induce a spirit of co-operation and friendliness among the neighbouring provinces whom he criticises and yet on whose good turn depends the solution of food shortage in Bengal? Not in the least, Sir, they would not submit to his policy of ruining their internal economy by agreeing to free trade at this crisis, when central planning and all-round planning instead of free trade, is so much

necessary and indeed a desideratum. Failing with the neighbouring governments, he goes with the beggar's bowl in his hand to the Government of India, in whom no residuary powers should remain in the opinion of the Muslim League, for coercing, if possible the neighbouring provinces. Akhanda Hindusthan he ridicules, but what does a unit "A" of the Eastern Pakistan say to the raising of the inter-provincial barriers in the scheme of free trade? The following press-message will show it. Shillong, May, 19th.—"Recent Government of India Order of creating an eastern zone consisting of Bihar, Orissa and Bengal and Surma Valley of Assam of complete free trade of good grains has been a bolt from the blue to the Government of Assam" said Sir Md. Saadulla, Premier in an interview with the Associated Press. "This proposal," he said, "was vigorously opposed by him" and he concluded the interview by saying that "the Assam Government have been compelled in the circumstances to lodge a dignified and vigorous protest with the Central Government and we are anxiously waiting to see the result. I appeal to our traders and also to our growers not to export rice and paddy for temporary gain in such quantities as will encroach upon the requirements of provincial consumption".

Mr. Suhrawardy has no doubt appealed to the United Nations over the head of the Government of India, probably as a Minister of the coming independent Pakistan, to come to our rescue, but, Sir, as the following message indicates, we and our great Minister shall have to put up for some time more with the misfortune of dealing with recalcitrant neighbours.

From Hotsprings (Virginia)—you are aware, Sir, that there was a Food Conference of the United Nations there—the following message of May 29th comes:—

"India's rice problem is being considered but experts here are of opinion that little can be done by this Conference or the Relief Conference, which, it is anticipated, will be held shortly. India's need for rice is fully recognised" but as an observer from another delegation said "Where is India to get it? Burma, Siam and French Indo-China have been cut off. There may be a solution, but it is difficult to see it at present".

When such is the case can we afford to keep ourselves at arm's length from our neighbours and inspire a sense of insecurity in them by our insistence on a policy of free trade or adopting a programme of import of food-grains through agents free to purchase on their own account and also at whatever price they may choose. No, Sir. Every effort should be made to come to direct understanding with our neighbours on a clearer recognition of our respective needs and requirements and not to alienate them by a supercilious attitude and by letting profiteers loose on them. This explains items (3) and (4) of my motion.

In my resolution, Sir, I have referred to the anti-hoarding drive as ill-conceived and demanded its revision. Let me explain, Sir, why I consider a revision of the scheme urgently necessary. An anti-hoarding drive in mofussil Bengal alone can only mean drive into Calcutta and the excluded areas and immunity to large stockists and traders. A drive against stocks

withheld from the market by profiteers and middlemen was urgently and imperatively necessary and could well be undertaken under the Defence of India Rules and the Food Grains Control Order, but a reckless drive against growers and consumers at this part of the year when the sowing season arrived and when the principal rice crop of the year was far off could not but be a downright act of *zoolum*. Large agriculturists have been warned and proceeded against, says the Minister's statement. What justification can there be to attach a grower's stocks whether a large grower or a small one? His *gola* is his bank.

It supplies not only his food but meets all his other requirements. If his stock can be attached and liquified why cannot, on a parity of reasoning, the big bank balances in the Calcutta banks? There is a food famine as well as a money famine in spite of the fallen rupee when it is admitted that the price of rice has gone beyond and must in any event stand at level beyond the purchasing power of the poor section of the people. If, again, agriculturists or growers must be relieved of their so-called surplus stocks why must not the Government purchase them at fair and reasonable prices, at any rate at the price paid by them to their agents? It is said that what is intended is to loan out the surplus stocks to the needy. What is a loan that has no legal contract or security behind it but a simple loot? What is the position in law of the local committees that are to take and distribute the attached stocks and collect and return them to their owners? Such a drive against producers' stocks cannot reduce but will only add to the alleged fear-complex started with removal of Denial rice after the harvest of 1941-42 and it may be reasonably apprehended that the thrift that could withstand the lure of high price will be gone and with it the zest to grow more food and soon after the next harvest is gathered all surplus stocks in the mofussil will be parted with and will either swell export or come to sleep in large godowns preparatory to passing into black markets, never again at least to give an opportunity to a Minister to oppress his own people at the bidding of the powers that be. The result may be a worse famine with even a better crop if the situation continues in this way. You can create more and more complexes by ill-directed coercive measures at the bidding of your masters but can never resolve the complexes in that way.

To silence all criticism, Mr. Suhrawardy has claimed remarkable success for his drive, though he is unable to state before the House even today what is the net result of the drive in figures, except that he can only say that there is deficit and deficit and deficit everywhere. Lakhs and lakhs of maunds of rice, not exceeding of course eight million maunds, have been dehoarded. Trade frozen in its track is again on the run. Prices, he said two months ago, must crack, and probably in his opinion are not only cracking but are crashing headlong downwards. But what do the official reports say? We are all aware, Sir, that on the 7th June the anti-hoarding drive was started and it continued for about a fortnight. For the week ending on the 9th June, 1943, the official report—the District Report—says: "The average price of common rice for the province this week is about 1$\frac{1}{16}$

seers per rupee. It has remained almost stationary as compared with the price in the previous week." That was in the first week of the anti-hoarding drive. Towards the end when the anti-hoarding drive came to a close, the District Report on crops says again for the week ending on the 23rd June: "The average price of common rice for the province this week is about $1\frac{7}{16}$ seers per rupee." Sir, that was how the price cracked or crashed. Three months ago,—if you turn to the District Reports for the week ending 3rd April—you will find that the average price of common rice for the province was about 2 seers per rupee and in the first week of May the average price of common rice for the whole province was about $1\frac{9}{16}$ seers per rupee. That is, Sir, how the prophecy of prices coming down has been fulfilled. Two months ago, on the 9th of May or thereabout, Mr. Suhrawardy observed at a conference that "the solution is in sight". Two months after, instead of a solution being in sight the problem continues to be as grave as before although the *aus* is ripening and although, Sir, at this time of the year generally the prices begin to come down. This is the net result of his anti-hoarding drive—this is the achievement of the Ministry working during the last three months with the active help of the powers that be.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Ahmed, there is an argumentative portion in your motion, namely, "as it has been conclusively proved that there is no surplus in this province". That portion must be deleted.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED: I bow to your ruling, Sir. Now, I beg to move:

"This Assembly is of opinion that the policy enunciated in the Anti-hoarding Order promulgated by the Ministry has utterly failed to solve the food problem of the country. This Assembly is further of opinion that the Anti-hoarding Drive has caused positive mischief by excluding Calcutta and Howrah from its operation and including the agriculturists in its operation."

সভাপতি মহোদয়, বাংলাদেশের খাদ্যসমস্যা আজ জটিল হতে জটিলতম অবস্থায় উপনীত হোয়েছে। আমার মনে হয়, একমাত্র স্বার্থপর লোক ব্যতীত এই জটিল সমস্যা সম্পর্কে বাংলাদেশের সকল লোকেই একমত এবং আজ খাদ্যের অভাবে বাংলাদেশের মানুষ যে হাহাকার কোরছে,—সে কথা সকলেই স্বীকার কোরবে। গত Progressive মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলের সময় যখন শ্রদ্ধেয় ফজলুল হক সাহেব প্রধান মন্ত্রী ছিলেন, এবং Sir Nazimuddin এর দল opposition এ ছিলেন, তখন আমাদের বাংলাদেশে চালের দর ১৫৲ টাকা থেকে ১৬৲ টাকা পর্য্যন্ত উঠেছিল। ধানের দর ছিলো—৯।১০৲ টাকা। সে সময় দেখেছি—opposition এর তরফ থেকে সুরাবর্দী সাহেব অত্যন্ত লম্বা লম্বা কথা কোয়েছেন এবং খাদ্য-সমস্যা সম্পর্কে তখনকার মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল "কোন ব্যবস্থাই কোরতে পারছেন না" এই সব বোলে চীৎকার কোরেছেন। কিন্তু ক'দিন পরেই সার জন হার্বার্টের অনুগ্রহে যখন মুসলীম লীগ দল মন্ত্রীত্ব গ্রহণ কোরলেন—সেই সময়ই,—আমরা দেখ্‌তে পাই মাননীয় সুরাবর্দী সাহেব খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধানের ভার নিজের হাতে নিয়েছেন। খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধানের ভার যে দিন থেকে সুরাবর্দী

সাহেব হাতে নিয়েছেন, সেইদিন থেকে আমরা দেখ্‌তে পাই বাংলাদেশের চাল প্রতিমণ—৩০৲ টাকা—এমন কি ৫০৲ টাকা পর্য্যন্ত উঠেছে। শুধু তাই নয়, এমন কয়েকটা district যেগুলি নাকি surplus district ছিলো—যেমন বরিশাল, খুলনা, সেখানে এমন অবস্থা হোয়েছে যে চাল পাওয়াই যায় না। আমাদের ময়মনসিংহ জেলারও কোন কোন স্থানে surplus ছিলো, সে-সব স্থানে বর্ত্তমানে দেখা যায় যে surplus তো নাইই, উল্টো deficit হোয়েছে। এ শুধু আমার কথা নয়, সুরাবর্দী সাহেব যে anti-hoarding drive এর ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন, তার report যদি প্রকাশ কোরতে সাহস পান তাহোলে তাঁকে বোলতে হবে বাংলাদেশের সর্ব্বত্রই deficit. আমার মনে হয় বাংলাদেশের লোকের যখন খাদ্যাভাবে হাহাকার উঠ্‌ছে তখন এই বাংলাদেশে এমন কোন লোক নাই যার নাকি বিন্দুমাত্র sense আছে—সে এই সময় দেশের মধ্যে anti-hoarding drive কোরতে সাহস পায়! যদি তার মূলে কোন সদুদ্দেশ্য থাক্‌তো তাহোলে কল্‌কাতা ও হাব্‌ড়াকে বাদ দেওয়া হোতো না। আমরা জানি না কেন কলকাতা ও হাব্‌ড়াকে বাদ দেওয়া হোয়েছে। যার বাংলাদেশ সম্বন্ধে বিন্দুমাত্রও রাজনৈতিক জ্ঞান আছে, সে অনায়াসেই বুঝতে পারবে—কেন কলকাতা ও হাব্‌ড়াকে anti-hoarding drive থেকে বাদ দেওয়া হোয়েছে। কলকাতা ও হাব্‌ড়াতে—মুসলীম লীগ মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল যাদের ভোটের উপর নির্ভর কোরে বেঁচে আছে সেই ইংরেজ প্রভুদের অনেক বড় বড় মিল আছে, ফ্যাক্টরী আছে, যেখানে হাজার হাজার লোক কাজ করে, সেখানকার সুব্যবস্থা কোরে প্রভুদের সন্তুষ্ট রাখ্‌তে হবে এই হোলো উদ্দেশ্য। তাছাড়া আর একটা উদ্দেশ্য আছে—সেটাও আমরা দেখাবো। সেটা হোলো—লীগ দলের জনৈক বিখ্যাত মেম্বার যাঁর নাম মিঃ ইস্পাহানী, সেই ইস্পাহানী কোম্পানিকে Bengal Governmentএর পক্ষ থেকে একমাত্র sole agent করা হোয়েছে চাল কেনার ব্যাপারে। তার ফলে তাঁর পকেটটা ভর্ত্তি হবে। তাছাড়া কলকাতায় যখন চাল ছিলো না—সে অবস্থায় anti-hoarding drive যদি করা যায় তাহোলে মফঃস্বলে যদি কোন খাদ্যশস্য মজুদ থাকে সেগুলি দেশের চাষীরা ইস্পাহানীর কাছে বিক্রয় কোরবে, এবং তিনি কিনে এনে hoard কোরতে পারবেন এই হলো আর একটা উদ্দেশ্য। ঐ ইস্পাহানী কোম্পানি এবং গভর্ণমেণ্টের এজেণ্ট সেজে যারা মফঃস্বলে বেড়িয়ে পড়েছে, তারা যে কোনো দামে ধান চাল কিন্‌ছে। সুতরাং আমরা আজ যদি বাংলাদেশের লোকদের খাওয়াতে চাই, যদি তাদের অন্ন-সমস্যা কিছু পরিমাণেও দূর কোরতে চাই, তখন দেখি—কি? Governmentএর anti-hoarding drive এর ফলে মফঃস্বলের ধান-চাল আজ বিশেষ কিছুই আর অবশিষ্ট নাই। যদি মফঃস্বল থেকে এই drive করবার ব্যবস্থা না হোতো তাহোলে অন্ততঃ এই মফঃস্বলের লোক কিছুদিন খেয়ে বাঁচতে পারতো। আমরা জানি মফঃস্বল—সহরে কি গ্রামে—যেখানেই যার কাছে কিছু ধান-চাল জমানো থাকে সে গ্রামবাসীদের ও প্রতিবেশীদের কিছু কিছু দিয়ে থাকে। এই anti-hoarding drive এর দ্বারা সে ব্যবস্থাটা ও পণ্ড করা হোয়েছে। গ্রামে যে সমস্ত গৃহস্থের কিছু মজুদ ধান-চাল ছিল, তারা সব গভর্ণমেণ্ট নিয়ে যাবেন এই ভয়ে বিক্রয় কোরে ফেলেছেন। তাতে অবস্থা এই দাঁড়িয়েছে—গরীব কৃষক যে নাকি তার স্বচ্ছল প্রতিবেশীর কাছে দু-এক মুঠো খেতে পেতো তাদের সেই সামান্যমাত্র সুযোগটাকেও হরণ করা হোয়েছে। এতে আমরা বোলতে পারি—কোন সভ্য গভর্ণমেণ্টই এমন কাজ কোরতে পারতেন না। কোন সভ্য গভর্ণমেণ্টই এমন ব্যাপকভাবে খানাতল্লাসীর order যে দিতে পারেন সেটা বিশ্বাস কোরতে ইচ্ছা হয় না। বাংলাদেশের লোক গরীব, তার মধ্যে শতকরা ৯০ জন কৃষক, এই কৃষকের শতকরা ৯৫ জন মুসলমান যারা নাকি গ্রাম

দেশে বাস করে, খাদ্যদ্রব্য উৎপন্ন করে, কিন্তু তারা যদিও গরীব হোক তাদের নিজেদের একটুকু মান ইজ্জৎ আছে, তারা সহরে লোকদের মতন মান-সম্মান একেবারে বিকিয়ে দিতে পারে নি; কিন্তু এই anti-hoarding driveএ হিন্দু-মুসলমান কৃষক জনসাধারণের বাড়ীতে বাড়ীতে খানাতল্লাসীর যে ব্যাপক অর্ডার দেওয়া হোয়েছে তা' দ্বারা তাদের যে মান-ইজ্জতে আঘাত করা হোয়েছে, একথা আমি অবশ্যই বোলবো। কোন সভ্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে এ রকম কোরতে পারে সে আমার কল্পনার বাইরে। (A member from the Government party: আপনার কল্পনা শক্তিই নাই) এ রকম কল্পনা আপনাদের ভিতরেই থাক। আমি এই প্রসঙ্গে আপনাদের আর একটা কথা বোল্‌তে চাই। সেটা হোচ্চে এই যে যখন সুরাবর্দী সাহেব এখানে oppositionএ ছিলেন সে সময় তিনি তাঁর বক্তৃতার ভিতর অনেক কথা বোলেছেন। তার ভিতর যে কথা তিনি স্পষ্ট কোরে বোলেছেন—সে হোলো এই যে তখনকার মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল খাদ্য-সমস্যার সমাধান কোরতে তো পারেনই নাই, বরং অনেকটা ক্ষতি কোরেছেন। কিন্তু আজ তখনকার অবস্থা আর এখনকার অবস্থা যদি তুলনা করা যায় তাহোলে দেখ্‌তে পাবেন যে তখনকার থেকে এখন দেশের দুরবস্থা একশো গুণ বেড়েছে। আমরা জানি যখন progressive coalition মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল এখানে ছিলো তখন উক্ত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল বাংলাদেশকে deficit province বোলে ঘোষণা করবার জন্য বার বার বোলেছিলেন। কিন্তু আমাদের সুরাবর্দী সাহেব মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলে যাওয়ার পরই বিবৃতির পর বিবৃতি দিতে লাগ্‌লেন—"বাংলাদেশে deficit নাই।" এবং তাঁর কথার প্রতিধ্বনি কোরে গভর্ণর সাহেব এমন কি আমেরি সাহেব পর্যান্ত বোল্‌তে লাগ্‌লেন যে বাংলাদেশে deficit নাই। আর আশ্চর্য্যের বিষয়—যে সময় বাংলাদেশের পল্লীঅঞ্চলে লোক ধান-চালের অভাবে কচু সিদ্ধ কোরে-গাছের পাতা সিদ্ধ কোরে খেয়ে কোন মতে জীবন্মৃত, অবস্থায় বাঁচবার জন্য সংগ্রাম কোরছে সেই সময় তিনি কি না বোলে বোস্‌লেন—যে বাংলাদেশে deficit নাই" এখানেই শেষ নয়, তাঁর প্রভুদের সন্তুষ্ট করবার জন্য anti-hoarding drive এর সূচনা কোরে দেখালেন, —প্রমাণ কোরতে অগ্রসর হলেন—যে বাংলাদেশে deficit নাই। মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলের সঙ্গে সংশ্লিষ্ট যাঁরা আছেন তাঁরা সকলেই সুরাবর্দী সাহেবের মতন সহরবাসী নন, তার ভিতর অনেক মফঃস্বলের—পল্লী গ্রামের লোক আছেন। সুরাবর্দী সাহেবের পাড়াগাঁয়ের সঙ্গে পরিচয় নাই, সেখানকার ধারণা তিনি কোরতে পারেন না, কিন্তু আমি জানি তাঁর একজন Parliamentary Secretary আছেন তিনি মফঃস্বলের লোক, তাঁর অন্ততঃ স্মরণ করিয়ে দেওয়া উচিত ছিল—বাংলাদেশের মফঃস্বলে চাষী জনসাধারণের অবস্থা আজ কি। তারপর কথা ওঠে গ্রামবাসী কৃষকের চালের বরাদ্দ নিয়ে। তিনি কৃষক সাধারণের জন্য ।৶১০ ছটাক চালের বরাদ্দ কোরেছেন। এবং এর ভিতর থেকে ৪ বৎসরের কম বাদের বয়স তারা বাদ পোড়েছে। মন্ত্রীদের দলে মফঃস্বলের মেম্বার যাঁরা আছেন—তাঁদের আমি জিজ্ঞাসা কোরছি—তাঁরা কি জানেন না—গ্রামের চাষীরা প্রত্যহ কতটী কোরে চালের ভাত খায়? তারা রুটি পায় না, বিস্কুট পায় না, মাখন পায় না, ফল পায় না, চপ্ কাট্‌লেট্ পায় না, আর কিছুই পায় না, শুধু পায় নিজের উৎপন্ন করা চাল এবং সেই চালের ভাত খেয়ে পেটের খিদে মিটিয়ে দিনের পর দিন, মাসের পর মাস, রৌদ্রে পুড়ে, বৃষ্টিতে ভিজে, কাজ কোরে যায়। সেই কৃষকের দৈনিক খোরাকীর পরিমাণ কম কোরে ধোরলেও তিন বেলায় সোয়া সের চালের কমে একটী কৃষকেরও হয় না। এবং কম খেলে তারা কাজও কোরতে পারে না। আজ জোরগলায় বলা হচ্চে—"Grow more food". grow কে কোরবে? কৃষক জনসাধারণকে যদি মাত্র ।৶১০ ছটাক চাল দৈনিক

খেতে দেওয়া হয়—১৫ দিনের ভিতর তাকে আর খুঁজেই পাওয়া যাবে না। তখন grow more foodএর কাজটা মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে নিজে গিয়ে কোরতে হবে!

আর একটা কথা, আমরা ছেলে বেলায় শুনেছি যে কল্‌কাতার ছেলেরা নাকি ধান গাছের তক্তা হয় কি না জানে না। ঠিক সেই রকমের অভিজ্ঞতা নিয়েই বাংলাদেশের ৪ বৎসরের শিশুর জন্য কোন চালের ব্যবস্থা করা হয় নাই। মন্ত্রী মহাশয় না জান্‌লেও তাঁর দলের মেম্বারদের জানা উচিত ছিলো যে, বাংলাদেশের বড় লোকদের কথা জানি না, কিন্তু কৃষকের ছেলের জন্য ছ' মাসের পর থেকেই ভাতের বন্দোবস্ত করা হয়। তার জন্য এক ছটাক চালও কেন ধরা হলো না তার কারণটা জিজ্ঞাসা কোরতে পারি কি? ।৶১০ ছটাক চালে কৃষক তার নিজের পেটের অর্দ্ধেক ক্ষুধাও মেটাতে পারবে না—তাথেকে আবার ছেলেকে দেবে কি কোরে?

আমার শেষ কথা হোচ্চে এই যে, যে ব্যক্তির বিন্দুমাত্র জ্ঞান আছে,—সেই বোল্‌বে যে সময় চালের দাম ১০৲ টাকা সেই সময় কৃষক জনসাধারণ চাল লুকিয়ে জমিয়ে রেখেছে—এমন ধারণা কারোই হওয়া উচিত নয়। অথচ সুরাবর্দী সাহেব এই ধারণারই বশবর্ত্তী হোয়ে তাঁর অভূতপূর্ব্ব Anti-hoarding driveএর ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন। বাংলাদেশের কৃষকেরা ধান-চাল শুধু খাওয়ার জন্যই জমিয়ে রাখে না,—তাদের কাপড়-চোপড় এবং আরো অনেক কিছু এই ধান-চাল বেচেই সংগ্রহ করে। সুতরাং যে দিক দিয়েই ধরা যাক না কেন—চালের মণ যখন ত্রিশ টাকা,—তখনও তারা ধান-চাল ধোরে রাখবে—এটা কাণ্ডজ্ঞানের অভাব আমরা মাননীয় সুরাবর্দী সাহেবের মতন তীক্ষ্ণবুদ্ধি লোকের কাছে আশা করিনি। যাক এখন আমি জিজ্ঞাসা কোরতে চাই—প্রত্যেক জেলার, প্রত্যেক মহকুমার, প্রত্যেক থানার detailed report আজ না হোক কাল publish কোরে আমাদের সমস্ত মেম্বারদের জানিয়ে দেওয়া হোক। তা যদি না হয় তাহোলে আমাদের দেশের লোকে এই কথাই বোল্‌বে—Anti-hoarding drive কোরে বাংলার জনসাধারণের উপকার তো হয়ই নাই বরং বিশ্বাসঘাতকতা করা হোয়েছে, এবং জনসাধারণের অত্যন্ত ক্ষতি করা হোয়েছে।

Khan Bahadur Maulvi HASHEM ALI KHAN: Sir, on behalf of the Progressive Party Khan Sahib Shamsuddin Ahmad Khondkar will move amendment No. 14.

Mr. SPEAKER: That will come long afterwards.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Bengal Congress Parliamentary Party, I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Bengal has so far failed to satisfactorily tackle the serious food situation in the province, and wtih a view to bring about early relief the following measures should be adopted without any further delay:—

(*i*) the handling of the food situation should forthwith be taken out of the arena of party politics and should be completely entrusted to a Central Food Council representative of all major political parties and a few experts on production, transport, nutrition and distribution;

(*ii*) the province of Bengal should be declared as a famine area so that the responsibility for feeding the entire population may devolve upon the Government;

(*iii*) there should be a complete stoppage of all exports of food-stuffs from the province on any account whatever and there should be no scope left for public suspicion in respect to the same;

(*iv*) attempts should be made to procure, by negotiation with respective Governments, sufficient quantities of food-grains from other provinces till the Aman crop of Bengal is harvested;

(*v*) efforts should be made to obtain imports of wheat and other available food-stuff from countries abroad as much to meet the present deficits in the normal requirements of the population of Bengal as to provide for the additional demands on the resources of the province on account of the war situation;

(*vi*) more vigorous measures should be adopted to promote the "Grow More Food Campaign" through (*i*) supply of sufficient quantities of good seeds, (*ii*) adequate facilities for irrigation, (*iii*) increased cultivation of cultivable waste land, (*iv*) conservation of cowdung manures and encouragement for the use of composts and other manures, including synthetic fertilisers, (*v*) encouragement to fodder crops, (*vi*) suitable advances to the cultivators for enabling them to undertake intensive cultivation, (*vii*) State-guarantee of minimum prices for food-grains produced by the agriculturists of Bengal for a period of at least three years; and lastly

(*vii*) steps should be taken to prevent waste in the consumption of food in any form.

Sir, in moving my resolution, I have attempted to cover the entire ground with a comprehensive outlook and, Sir, I have tried to apply my mind to the question more as a student of economics and one anxious to solve the very serious situation that is facing everyone of us than as a politician who is trying to get some advantage out of the debacles in which the country has been thrown now. I submit, Sir, that Government has failed. That means not that the present Ministry alone has failed, but this Ministry has failed; the previous Ministry had failed and behind the Ministry the forces that are guiding the Ministry have bungled and, Sir, they have bungled mainly because of certain very patent reasons.

The first and most important reason for their failure that appears to my mind is that neither the present Ministry nor the past Ministry, guided as they were by considerations other than national, have approached the problem as they ought to have done to face a major national crisis. Both the present Ministry as well as the past have tried to tackle the problem from the point of view of party politics. The position in the country is such today—and I earnestly appeal to the members of the House and to all sections of my countrymen—that we should shed all caste or party approach to solve this question. Sir, the most important and fundamental thing in connection with the solving of the food situation is that we must create complete public confidence in the measures that are to be taken up and, Sir, the attempts made so far either by the present Ministry or the last Ministry do not show that such public confidence has been sought to be secured.

The second important reason for which Government have failed is that Government have approached the problem from the point of view of maintaining supplies to a comparatively small section of our people, namely, those that are engaged in essential war work and essential services. Sir, the history of control, the history of supplies, the history of distribution and supplies in and around the city of Calcutta and the neighbourhood shows that Government have had at no stage any comprehensive policy to cover all sections of Bengal, rural as well as urban, and even with regard to the urban population Government have not sought to help all classes of urban people. There have been attempts to give supplies freely to industrial labour and to certain classes of employees only who in their opinion have been doing important war work.

This, I submit, has been a very wrong approach however much there might have been the necessity for maintaining essential supplies and food supplies for such class of people. It is equally necessary to remember that unless the morale of the civil population in general is maintained and unless prices are kept within reasonable limits for all classes of people it was sheer madness to think that by mere tinkering with the problem by maintaining supplies for a small section of Government servants and agencies only one could solve a very serious situation of this character.

The third important respect in which the Government had failed, in my humble opinion, is this The Government had adopted measures based upon piecemeal control of supplies and of partial control of movement, the removal of price control and the encouragement of purchases of rice and paddy within the province at any price by Government Agents, large dealers and industries. This is a policy which I submit was entirely wrong. On a previous occasion, Sir, on the 27th February, 1943, in connection with another similar motion that we moved on behalf of this party in this House, I explained in detail the difficulties we felt with regard to the Government measures up to that time. Thereafter, the present Ministry has, in continuing the same policy, adopted several measures. The action that the Government had taken was on the assumption that there was plenty. The Government had also all along befooled themselves and befooled the country by proclaiming from house tops that "everything is all right; there is plenty of supplies, and it is only the villagers, hoarders and profiteers that are to blame". Sir, the Government started all along on a wrong premise. I sympathise with the Hon'ble Minister when he says that Government wanted to create some confidence in the mind of the public and to stem the panic-complex which was already there and, therefore, he had to use the language of consolation. There is something in that. I fully realise that in a situation like ours nothing will help if we all go on shouting that we are terribly short and there is nothing to be given to the people. At the same time, whatever might have been necessary for the purposes of propaganda and creating public confidence, the measures that Government should have devised ought not to have been based on such false data. Knowing fully well that really there was a shortage, it was simply criminal on the part of the Government to waste their valuable time on measures which

could not have been thought of if they had known that there was not plenty. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister in charge had stated that he was prepared for the worst and that he was planning his schemes "preparing for the worst but hoping for the best". I do hope that he had prepared himself for the worst.

The next important thing that the present Government did was to insist on the Government of India to bring about decontrol of provincial movements. Sir, in that respect, I must say one word of appreciation to the present Government. I do submit, Sir, that it was a really forward step to be in a position to get the assent of the Government of India to move supplies from adjoining surplus provinces. But, Sir, as we did point out to the Hon'ble Minister in charge during the time when this matter was under discussion on the 17th May last, the measures of decontrol ought to have been coupled with certain very healthy steps immediately taken without which the entire decontrol scheme would break down and would not yield the results. We expected that the adjoining provinces could never have agreed to absolute free trade in these areas. On the other hand, I had a talk with at least one Chief Secretary of an adjoining province and his Minister in charge who assured me that if there was any necessity, that Government would make arrangements to give Bengal supplies at reasonable rates while keeping enough for their own people and while keeping a margin of profit for the province to enable them, if necessary, to subsidise food at controlled cheaper rates where as a result of Government's action shortage might be experienced.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: They came to that point of view later after free trade was introduced.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The Hon'ble Minister knows full well all that. I am sure he also had a discussion with them on the same lines but somehow or other—I would not criticise any official—certain officials of Government wanted to stand on official *zid*. They did not realise to what extent the position of the Provincial Government could make or unmake such decisions. The Provincial Government concerned did threaten that in case they were under law forced or compelled to part with their stock it would be seen that not a single cartman would take the stock, not a single cooly move the rice, not a single person in the whole province would help to take out the food-grains from the province and that if there were lootings or any other criminal acts on the stocks purchased the Government would not hold themselves responsible. Their Police might not be requisitioned for assistance in coping with these things. That was a prospect which the Hon'ble Minister in charge ought to have realised. Sir, it was a great mistake to rely only on the Government of India's fiat.

The next important measure that the present Government did take was the measure of food drive throughout the length and breadth of this province. So far as we on this side of the House are concerned, we do appreciate, and we did make that clear even before the present Government came along, the necessity of taking proper statistics of available food for this

province before we can plan out its proper distribution and equitable distribution. But, Sir the food drive meant something much more. The food drive did not fix any responsibility on the Government at all. It mainly tried to shift the burden of the responsibility on the people by asking them to organise self-help for themselves.

(At this stage, the blue light was lit.)

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: May I have five minutes more, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Go on and let us see.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The food drive plan by its very nature was bound to fail because it was economically unsound for while the food drive was permitted to go on and while the village committees were allowed to have stocks estimated ostensibly for the purpose of maintaining local supplies, there was no restriction put on large purchases by outsiders in that very area and removal of the stock to Calcutta and other industrial areas. You could not have free trade and simultaneously self-sufficiency. The two are economically contradictory. The food drive also failed because in spite of protestations and honest attempts, I am prepared to give the Hon'ble Minister in charge credit on his part or on the part of his Department,—there has not been even in the most helpful part of the country a proper approach as detailed in the notes circulated by the Hon'ble Minister. In the first place we have reports from almost every part of the province that there was not a single case where a food committee was actually formed by the villagers themselves assembled at a public place. Food committees were formed by officials who went and just got together, as usual, a few persons from among certain persons at their beck and call and these persons,—at least most of them were not, as the Hon'ble Minister contemplated, of the enlightened poor, and they themselves might have been responsible for some amount of hoarding—and it was these persons who were responsible for this food drive. Apart from that, many of them did not have that intention of honesty for which an oath was proposed to be given to all of them. In these circumstances the drive could not have achieved the results that were expected.

Then, I found that the present Government had certain measures for Calcutta and Howrah. They wanted to replace the present controlled shops by a number of Government shops. I am very doubtful how far such a measure could be helpful because if Government did not make proper use of the men in the trade, it would be idle to think that some Government servants appointed on salaries would be able to do the work better and more efficiently and that they would all be honest men who could come to Government's aid. The better plan would be to increase the number of controlled shops and also to increase the number of inspectors. These men could have secured better control or better inspection could be ensured so that controlled shops may not indulge in black marketing.

Sir, my resolution has got five important parts. The first relates to the causes of failure and I submit that the failure has been not merely of the Ministry but also of those who take the advice of the Ministers and who

ultimately guide the policy of the executive. The second part, I think, says that in order to remove the present difficulties what should have been done and what should be done even now is to give complete authority to a Central Food Council, not merely to a mere *ad hoc* Food Council, but a Council which ought to function from day to day and take up the entire responsibility for the whole province. And Government should be in a position to accept the whole recommendation of it whatever consequence may follow and they should stand by it. That should be practically an autonomous body composed of all sections of the people and experts to deal with a food situation like this.

Then the third part wants to place the responsibility for the whole population on the Government of Bengal by declaring Bengal as a famine area, especially when the Hon'ble Minister has today accepted the fact that the food drive has revealed that in almost every part of Bengal there is acute shortage. In the fourth part I have suggested concrete suggestions as to how immediately we can tackle the problem of stopping exports and increasing imports. It has been said that there has been no export of rice for some time past but reports trickle down to us through certain private sources, that certain organisations known practically like "A. B. S. D.," etc., that food-grains are going out through the port of Calcutta. There must be no actual export at all and if there is no export let the Hon'ble Minister be in a position to create public opinion in his favour to bring satisfactory evidence before the public that there has been really no export. In the fifth part of the resolution I have made a plea for a more real and vigorous grow-more-food campaign. I have seen the latest report of what the new Ministry has done in connection with the grow-more-food campaign and I have noticed all that has been attempted to be done as reported in *The Bengal Weekly* a few days ago. But in spite of all that I have noticed that money has been wasted more on mere advertisement and newspaper publicity than on real measures of which I have given a catalogue. And last but not the least I appeal to the Government and to the whole country to stop all kinds of waste in the matter of use of food.

With these observations I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: Sir, I beg to move: "This Assembly is of opinion that the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister of Civil Supplies on the 5th July, 1943, on the food situation in the Province betrays a lack of appreciation of the continued deterioration in the food situation in the Province on the part of the Government and their failure to tackle the problem by shifting their responsibility and initiative in solving it to voluntary efforts of the people only. This Assembly is further of opinion that the Government should have declared Bengal as a famine area and taken measures for ensuring supply of food-grains to the people by a complete stoppage of all exports of food-grains outside the Province, by imports, through negotiations, from other Provinces, of adequate quantities of rice, wheat and other food-grains and through the good office of the Government of India, from abroad, and by an equitable distribution of the

available supply in rural as well as in urban areas while satisfying accepted nutritional standards, and by promoting the "Grow More Food Campaign" by making provision for supply of sufficient quantities of good seeds, manures including synthetic fertilisers, crop-planning, irrigational facilities, suitable agricultural loans to enable cultivators to extend their operations, and utilisation of fallow and waste lands."

Sir, it is with overpowering sense of grimness and tremendous character of the problem that I rise to place my motion before the House. The food situation in Bengal has now entered into its most crucial stage. The solution brooks no delay, and party affiliations and prejudices should not colour our vision and judgment. Everybody present in this House should approach the problem from an objective and scientific spirit, free from any communal passion and party bias. Our discussion tonight should, therefore, be carried on in a dispassionate and helpful manner. Let it not be said of us that at this hour of national crisis, influenced by ephemeral political considerations, we failed in our duty by the people of the province. Sir, I will not try to apportion blame as to how and why the present acute position has been brought about, whether by the bunglings of the Government or due to factors over which the Provincial Government had little control. This will add to our bitterness and recriminations and will not help in the generation of that atmosphere of mutual trust, good will and co-operation which is so essential for the solution of such a vast problem of vital national importance.

The Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has waxed eloquent over the results of his great Anti-hoarding Drive and has given expression to his "great satisfaction" in the course of his statement. That Mr. Suhrawardy has reason to be greatly satisfied is beyond doubt as he has been able to place the unlimited resources and patronage of the Government at the disposal of his friend Mr. Ispahani, a prominent pillar of the Muslim League in Bengal, for purchasing food-grains from the Eastern Zone for supply to the Government. I will presently revert to this aspect of the question, but let me say something about the drive which Mr. Suhrawardy has so much trumpeted. Mr. Suhrawardy says that he has as a result of the drive all the information about food requirements, stocks in hand, seeds in hand, etc., in a word a complete food census of the Province, but he has not given us any figures which are the essence of any statistical survey. Although he has not directly admitted shortage, the very fact, as he has stated, that it will not be possible to meet our requirements without augmentation of the provincial resources by foodstuffs from other provinces is a clear proof of shortage. The further fact that in his anti-hoarding drive Mr. Suhrawardy had to envisage a provision of merely four seers of rice per head per fortnight is an admission, though in an indirect way, of an acute shortage of rice in the country. Will he now kindly enlighten us as to the exact number of people of the Province for whom this starvation diet has been provided? That would indeed give us some picture of Bengal as it is now.

Mr. Suhrawardy has now come forward with a novel explanation for his denying so long a state of scarcity. According to him, "insistence on

shortages would only increase panic and stimulate hoarding and thereby aggravate the general food scarcity and push up prices." On the other hand, he has all along been constantly harping on large stocks having been hoarded by merchants and speculators. I am sure, all of us in this House would support any strong measure against the unsocial conduct of hoarders and speculators. But we must at the same time view the matter in the right perspective. What is after all the total quantity that has been hoarded, apart from that which forms the normal carry-over of the merchants taking its own course to come into the market? On the other hand, does Mr. Suhrawardy realise that his insistence on hoarding and speculating as the main cause of the present trouble is capable of creating and has actually created a prejudice against merchants including the large number who have been carrying on their trade quite honestly, among the general public to the effect that it is they who are withholding supplies from the market and are responsible for the present state of affairs? Thus the Government have provided an incitement to looting of granaries and stocks in movement—a matter of common occurrence in these days. Do the Government realise that while by thus overstating the part played by hoarding they are able to hoodwink the vast mass of our illiterate fellow citizens about their—I mean the Government's—responsibility in the matter of food-supply to the people, they are also creating a serious feeling of disaffection among various sections of His Majesty's subjects in Bengal? It cannot, therefore, be denied that the Government cannot entirely absolve themselves of the charge of being responsible for grain riots and other agrarian troubles in the rural areas.

But what is the actual amount of hoards seized as a result of the drive? Mr. Suhrawardy himself says this amount to be approximately 7 to 8 million maunds, an amount barely sufficient for the Province as a whole for not more than fifteen days. Again the measuring rod by which the success or failure of the great Food Drive is to be judged is provided by the price level of food-grains which, instead of showing any signs of coming down, is increasing day by day to abnormal heights beyond the reach of the majority of the people.

Now, a few words regarding the action taken by Mr Suhrawardy in entrusting to Messrs. M. A Ispahani the work of purchasing rice for the Government of Bengal from the Eastern Zone The explanation offered by him for this extraordinary action are really amusing and even amazing. The long apologia offered by him in thus strengthening the hold of the Muslim League Ministry by the most objectionable method of offering Government patronage to a pillar of the party would appear to all unbiassed persons as most unconvincing if they were told that Mr. Suhrawardy has tried to mislead the House by a misstatement of the grossest type. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I confess I was very much surprised when I heard him state that in this matter the Government had consulted various merchants and Chambers and could find no one who could undertake the task better than Messrs. M. A. Ispahani. I would like to state categorically that among the various Chambers whom, Mr. Suhrawardy says, he has consulted,

my constituency, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, is certainly not one. I am also authorised to state that no member of my Chamber was given any opportunity either through the Chamber or in their individual capacity to consider any terms that might have been given by the Government for the task of purchasing rice for Bengal, neither were any enquiry made of them regarding their ability or willingness to undertake this task. My Chamber has officially put in its protest to the Government, and I want this protest also to be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings of the House.

I do not want, Sir, to be misunderstood I have nothing to say against Messrs. M. A. Ispahani being given the patronage of the Government, but what I object to is, firstly, a palpably wrong statement by the Hon'ble Minister to mislead the House, and secondly, the hole and corner method followed in the matter of entrusting a firm, however big it might be, to the exclusion of others with such an important task.

Mr. Suhrawardy has made much of the fact that at one stroke of the pen Mr. Ispahani agreed to forego a profit of some Rs 40 lakhs on the stocks which he possessed Evidently, the Hon'ble Minister seeks to convey the impression that for public good Mr Ispahani agreed to put up with a loss of this huge sum. But the real fact is that instead of incurring any positive loss, Mr Ispahani agreed to forego an additional profit of that amount, as his actual cost price must have been much below the price at which he sold his stocks to the Government And on what consideration did he agree to do so? Mr Ispahani has been appointed the sole agent for purchase of food-grains on Government account on a remuneration and given a blank cheque with an advance of Rs 3 crores with which he can make purchases at any prices he may consider necessary. It is, therefore, not for nothing that Mr. Ispahani is reported to have foregone a profit of Rs. 40 lakhs.

Mr. SPEAKER: How long will you take, Mr. Sen?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: I will take another five or six minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Try to finish as quickly as possible.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH SEN: It will also be realised from what Mr. Suhrawardy said that Mr. Ispahani had so long been maintaining a stock, I shall not say hoard, which must not be less than 10 lakhs of maunds of rice at the minimum. This amount is equal to one month's consumption of rice of Calcutta and only one merchant had been holding such a big stock and thus withholding it from the market, perhaps not without the knowledge of the Government.

By the way, will the Hon'ble Minister kindly explain to the House whether the resignation of Mr. McInnes has anything to do with this appointment of Mr. Ispahani as the sole Food Purchasing Agent?

I now propose to deal with Mr. Suhrawardy's plan to distribute rice and other necessaries of life in Calcutta and other urban areas through the agency of a chain of Government distributing centres. Certain pertinent questions at once raise themselves. What will be the role of normal trade channels in this plan? Will they continue to function along with the Government distributing centres? What will be the relation between these two agencies of supply? Government have not definitely said whether these distributing centres will work in exclusion of or in conjunction with the trade. So far as mufassal towns are concerned, the proposal to introduce rationing, among others, through responsible persons or organisations considered reliable and imbued with sufficient spirit of social service will, I am afraid, open the gateway to the very corruption and inefficiency which the Government want to stamp out. It is needless to state that a Ministry which has come into power without adequate party backing should try to strengthen their hold by making their selection of distributing agents on considerations other than those of necessary trade experience, efficiency and justice and fairplay. It would most assuredly perpetuate the same corruption, malpractices and inefficiency, perhaps in a more aggravated form. Government have not also said how will they determine the "market rates" at which their distributing centres will supply to those who are above the minimum income group fixed for the purpose. If, however, Government propose to open a large number of distributing centres in addition to, and not in replacement of, controlled shops that are now functioning, some relief may be provided to the people who are now to stand and wait for hours together in long queues in front of controlled shops. The Government have announced that they will open 800 such distributing centres in Calcutta and Howrah, but so far they have opened only one. If their scheme progress snail-like in this fashion, it remains a matter of conjecture when they will be able to open all the 800 shops. The problem cannot, in my opinion, be tackled effectively by this means alone. I would therefore like to record my emphatic protest against this policy of the Government of opening Government shops for the supply of food-grains instead of utilising the services of existing trade channels. The experiences of countries which have adopted a rationing system also demonstrate that they have always utilised the services of normal trade channels. What I feel is that it would be extremely unwise for the Government to dislocate the existing supply organisation.

Now, coming to the Government of India's basic food plan, I must say that it is mainly due to the mishandling of the situation by our Government that the plan has been frustrated so far as Bengal is concerned. Under the plan, the Central Government were to prescribe the quantity which a surplus province or State was to give and a deficit province was to receive. The Government have not so far said what is the monthly quota that has been assigned to Bengal under the basic plan, nor any idea has been given as to how much of this quota has been received so far. Mr. Suhrarwardy has, however, bemoaned the lack of good neighbourly feeling among the provinces of Bihar, Orissa and Assam and their non-co-operating attitude for not falling in line with the Government of India's

plan. I also share with Mr. Suhrawardy his regret for this exhibition of lack of neighbourly feeling on the part of these provinces, particularly in view of the fact that Bengal carries a large number of people of these Provinces. But did Mr. Suhrawardy ever enquire why they had taken this attitude? Is it not mainly due to the lack of tact and bad handling of the situation by the Bengal Government that these Provinces adopted this unfriendly attitude? In their anxiety to bring as much rice as possible into Bengal, the Government induced the Centre to declare the Eastern Zone as a free trade area which gave opportunity to some favoured merchants to make indiscriminate buying in the neighbouring Provinces as a result of which prices there shot up also to abnormal heights. The other Provinces regarded this action as a coercive measure. It was therefore quite natural for them to take steps for their own safety and security and no blame attaches to such a conduct on their part

(At this stage the member reached the time-limit but was allowed one minute more to finish his speech.)

If instead our Government have negotiated in a friendly manner with these Provinces and requested them to purchase through their own agents and hand over the surplus to us, the attempt would then have been crowned with some measure of success and grains would have started moving into Bengal. Government thus started at the wrong end It is their bungling in the matter that has made the neighbouring Provinces reluctant to supply whatever surplus they possess to Bengal

With these words, Sir, I commend the resolution for the acceptance by the House.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

(Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhawmik rose to speak)

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr Bhawmik, I hope that you will simply move your motion. I can give you only two minutes I can tell you that it has been arranged that at least all the motions must be moved today and it is proposed that we should rise tonight at 8-30 p.m. Therefore I request you to finish in a minute.

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHAWMIK: Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government has failed (1) to solve the food problem of Bengal properly for which millions of people of the Province are almost without food and are dying like cats and dogs from starvation; (2) to declare that the Province is under the grip of famine and to do necessary works for the relief operation; (3) to import rice, paddy and other foodstuff from the neighbouring provinces and to supply them to people at the cheaper price, at which the people can purchase; (4) to make anti-hoard campaign successful as most of the rice and paddy have gone outside the deficit areas and which has been purchased by the Government agents; (5) to publish the result of food census which will show colossal deficit of

food in the Province; (6) to take census of Calcutta and Howrah when major portions of rice are lying stocked by the merchants, businessmen and other capitalists.

আমার district বন্যা এবং বৃষ্টিতে ভেসে গিয়েছে, সেখানে লোকে খেতে পায় না। যে সংবাদ আসছে এবং প্রত্যহ যে খবর পাচ্ছি—(The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: আপনার district কোথায়?) আমি মেদিনীপুর সম্বন্ধে বলছি—৭ নম্বর ইউনিয়নে যেখানে চার হাজার লোকের বাস—সেখানে লোকে খেতে পায় না। সেখানে ছয়টি লোক গত সপ্তাহে না খেতে পেয়ে মারা গিয়েছে। মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয়কে একটা copy পাঠিয়েছি, তার ভিতরেই ঘটনার সমস্ত বিবরণ আছে। পটাস্‌পুর থানার আট নম্বর ইউনিয়নে যেখানে দশ হাজার লোকের বাস এবং যেখানে ৯৯ মণ চালের দরকার সেখানে মাত্র ৪০ মণ চাল পাচ্ছে।

গত ১৬ই তারিখ থেকে বর্ত্তমান তারিখের মধ্যে ৫টি লোক সেখানে না খেয়ে মারা গিয়েছে। এ সমস্ত খবর সেখানকার Union Boardএর ডায়েরীতে লিখিত হয়েছে। যখন বর্ত্তমানের মন্ত্রী মহাশয়রা তাঁদের এই গদিতে বসেছিলেন তখন তাঁরা বলেছিলেন যে বাংলাদেশে খাদ্যের সুরাহা করবেন এবং এও বলেছিলেন যে তিন সপ্তাহের মধ্যে এমন একটা ব্যবস্থা করবেন যাতে বাংলাদেশের সমস্ত লোক খেতে পায়। যখন আগের মন্ত্রী-সভা চলে যায় তখন চালের মণ ছিল ১৮৲ টাকা আর এখন আমাদের চালের মণ হয়েছে ৩০৲ টাকা। এই দুঃসময়ে আমাদের ইস্পাহানি কোম্পানী ঘাটাল এবং জলডুবি থানার বহু জায়গা থেকে হাজার হাজার মণ চাল কিনে এনেছেন। যেখানে reliefএর জন্যও লোকে চাল পায় না, সেই district থেকে আমাদের মন্ত্রী মহাশয়রা বহু মণ চাল কিনে Calcutta নিয়ে এসেছেন। কাজেই আজকে যে সমস্ত লোক অনাহারে মারা যাচ্ছে তার জন্য Government দায়ী। আমি সেই জন্য Governmentকে অনুরোধ করছি Midnapore district এবং বাংলার অন্যান্য districtকে famine area বলে declare করুন। আজকে প্রত্যেক লোকের মৃত্যুর জন্য present Ministry দায়ী। যদি তাঁরা এই দুরবস্থা দূর না করেন, তবে তাঁদের লোকের কাছে অপরাধী হোতে হবে।

(The Hhon'ble Mr. H. S SUHRAWARDY: নিশ্চয়ই আমাদের জেলে যেতে হবে!!)

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sen, are you moving your motion or will you simply speak on it?

Rai Bahadur JOGESH CHANDRA SEN: Yes, Sir; I will move my motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: But I was given to understand that no motion from your party will be moved.

Rai Bahadur JOGESH CHANDRA SEN: Sir, I shall move my motion and I shall speak only for five minutes.

I beg to move the resolution standing in my name, namely, that this Assembly is of opinion that the policy pursued since the assumption of office by the present Government to solve the alarming food situation in the Province has failed through the lack of an intelligent and comprehensive plan

and the adoption of hasty measures directed not against the big stockists, hoarders and the profiteeers but against ordinary consumers, agriculturist-producers and persons of comparatively modest means in the rural areas.

This Assembly deplores the failure of the Government to take advantage of the situation created by the removal of inter-provincial trade-barriers by negotiations with other Provincial Governments and their adoption for the purchase of food-grains of a procedure based on patronage instead of considerations of public welfare

This Assembly therefore declares that in order to prevent the aggravation of the situation beyond recovery, the following steps must be immediately taken:--

(*i*) Declaration of the province of Bengal as famine-area and the stoppage of all exports therefrom;

(*ii*) Vigorous prosecution of the "Grow More Food" campaign with provision for supply of necessary manures and financial assistance to agriculturists;

(*iii*) Arrangements for the importation of foodstuffs into Bengal from surplus Provinces and from outside India;

(*iv*) Regulation of the movement of crops within the Province in order to ensure that the deficit areas are not denuded of even their inadequate stocks;

(*v*) Provision of finances for the purchase and distribution of any surplus discovered in any part of Bengal;

(*vi*) Acceptance of responsibility by the Government to provide food for the people during the present crisis.

Sir, the resolution speaks for itself and many words are not needed to explain the object of my motion Many of the points have been ably discussed by some of my friends and other friends who will speak later will discuss them in more detail I would only make a few general observations as it is no good repeating arguments

The present crisis is due entirely to the utter mismanagement and unsympathetic administration as every action of the present Ministry is meant for the benefit of the Theatrical Company and not for the good of the people in general. They have no wide outlook, no heart in the administration.

Sir, I warn the Government not to play with human lives. The Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan during the last food debate expected a rebellion when the price of rice was Rs. 16 per maund but, Sir, today it is Rs. 35 per maund and still there is no revolution And why? Because the people of this land do not believe in violence and so the Ministry is still safe in its peacock throne, but the days are not far off when the voice from the land of dead would demand your explanation even before the day of judgment. Their voice will haunt you in your parlour, in your dream and in your sleep. They have lost their lives due to your criminal negligence. You have failed and failed hopelessly to relieve the distress of the people. You have

disregarded the people, you have disregarded the parties who could give you support, who could give you brain and help you to remove your brain fever.

I would now place before the House extracts from the speech of one in whom the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has the greatest confidence and I would not hesitate to present the same before the House as my own. These are the factors: "Before I sit down I make a final appeal to the House. I beg it to realise the very serious nature of the situation. It is not that we intend to make political capital out of the criminal conduct of the Ministry but things have come to such a pass, the Province is already so near chaos and disorder, dangers ahead are so considerable, the Ministry is so thoroughly incompetent and worse, that if the honourable members have any regard for the future and better government of this Province, if they have any concern for good order, good management of this Province, if they have any concern for the very lives of the people, if they wish to save the unhappy masses from starvation and death then I would appeal to them, particularly those who sit in serried ranks behind the Ministry, to support our motion and record their opinion that this Ministry has definitely failed to do its duty by the people. How long, I beg of the House to consider, are we to bear the dead weight of this Ministry, bankrupt and sterile? How long are personal reasons, the prospect of a few jobs, promises of patronage, benefits already received, being received and due to be received going to keep you from doing your duty by the people?"

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, could not that be taken as read?

Rai Bahadur JOGESH CHANDRA SEN: Only a few lines more, Sir, and then I will place the issue before the House and tell the House who the author is.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am the author.

Rai Bahadur JOGESH CHANDRA SEN: "How long are those who say that they want an efficient and reliable administration, an administration that discharges its duties and fulfils its assurances, how long are those who talk of cleanliness in the administration and justice and fairplay to all, going to continue to support a Ministry utterly denuded of decent standards and confessedly incompetent? The food problem is one of the major problems of today. It affects every one of us. It affects primarily the poor and the masses whose interests must always be paramount, far higher than any other consideration. Let us in considering this problem not be influenced by political sentiments but do our duty by the people and throw out a Government that has proved itself thoroughly incapable of handling the situation and place, if we can, the interests of the people above our own personal and political interests, and then let us sit together and tackle this problem under a decent regime, wedded to the welfare of the masses." This memorable speech was delivered by no other person than the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, the Civil Supplies Minister, who was only Mr. Suhrawardy then and aspiring for this exalted position. I believe he will admit now that what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose.

All that he said on that day was not true. But that cap fits him now and he must wear it. During the last debate members on the Opposition Benches suggested shooting, hanging and penal servitude for the incompetent Ministers but, Sir, I do not believe in violence and this time I would suggest that the incompetent set be got rid of by non-violent means. With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER: There are two motions in your name. Which are you going to move?

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: I am not moving motion No. 13. I only want to move motion No. 14.

Mr. SPEAKER: You may move motion No. 14.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly is strongly of opinion that the present Ministry stands condemned for its utter failure to improve the food situation of the Province.

It is a simple motion and speaks for itself and I therefore do not propose to take up much time of the House. Sir, during the last Ministry, we in this House, had a good deal of discussion. As a result thereof, a separate portfolio was created and Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee was entrusted with it. But during the infancy of the Food Minister, the last Ministry had to go out. It could not handle the scheme that was formulated and enunciated by that Ministry. That Ministry could not do many things as it had to work under adverse and unfavourable circumstances. During the regimé of the last Ministry and during the last session of this Assembly, members now shining in the ministerial benches shone in the Opposition benches and my friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan moved a motion of this kind which was treated as a censure motion against the previous Ministry. My friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan was very loud in his speech and took that Ministry to task for not tackling the food problem very satisfactorily and from the right angle of vision. Then, Sir, my honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy was very loud in his denunciation of the black markets and profiteers and we expected that after the assumption of office by these gentlemen there would be an attempt made at least for improving the situation, if not for finding a thorough solution of the problem. Instead of the situation being improved, I would submit to you, Sir, the situation has gone from bad to worse. (Dr. Abdul Motaleb Malik: And due to what?) The situation has gone from bad to worse and I shall now satisfy the House that the manner in which the present Ministry is pursuing its policy is far from satisfactory and there is no hope that the situation will improve at all. I shall tell the House that these Ministers do not seriously mean what they say. I thought that the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan and the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy were very serious over the food problem of the Province when they commented on the action of the last Ministry

during the last session. But, Sir, from their subsequent conduct and from the policy they pursue I am fully convinced that these two gentlemen shed only crocodile tears for the poor starving millions of the Province. Sir, they did not mean what they said on the floor of this Assembly. A few days ago, these Ministers, I should say an army of Ministers, had a profiteering tour with their Parliamentary Secretaries all over Bengal. It was not for ascertaining the real condition of Bengal from the standpoint of the food problem but it was for receiving receptions, getting caskets and addresses of welcome. On the 5th of May last Mr. Tamizuddin Khan and Mr. Shahabuddin had been to my place. When I learnt that they would be going there, I invited them to dine with me while they were there. Mr. Shahabuddin refused my invitation on the plea that the Cabinet had taken a decision that the Ministers should not dine with gentlemen in the mufassal and should not take anything publicly in the mufassal. They were naturally busy with the food problem and so long as they could not solve the food problem, they could not accept invitations. But what did we see when they went to that place? After finishing the conference work and after they were decorated with garlands and after they had received addresses of welcome and after hearing the shouts of "*Zindabad*" in the evening I saw they were taking their tea publicly and eating good dishes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that all relevant?

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: It is a solution of the food problem.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: What I was given to understand was that their dominant reason was that by taking 20 dishes, 20 palatable dishes, they could find a solution of this problem. So, it is quite relevant. However, Sir, I leave it at that. The present Ministry has come out with denouncements of black-markets I have got many things to say about black-markets but due to shortness of time I shall not refer to them. But I say most emphatically black-markets and the very worst kind of them do exist mainly at the connivance of the present Ministry. So far, Sir, about black-markets.

Now, Sir, I shall take the House with me to the scheme formulated by the present Ministry with regard to hoarding and an attempt has just been made by them to solve the present problem by an anti-hoarding drive. But the farce of the anti-hoarding drive became apparent as soon as it came to light that the big rice magnates of Calcutta, the big Government agents, the big rice stockists and traders were to be excluded from the operation of that drive. Moreover, they have even now been given a free hand to purchase rice in the interior mufassal of Bengal at any price they like. I wish to take the House with me into the interior mufassal of Bengal in order to place before them the true picture of what this anti-hoarding drive of Government has done. This drive was carried out in the mufassal by the officers of Government and by some official institutions. This army of officers, unskilled, untrained and ignorant in the line and the so-called squad masters have had an opportunity to take recourse to corruption and

bribery. That these officers and squad masters were utterly ignorant of what they were entrusted with to do became apparent in some cases in the mufassal when they distributed and used wrong forms in connection with their work. Sir, it will be a surprise to the House to know that everyday five to seven hundred people assembled before the offices of the Subdivisional Officers for taking out permits. Sir, country boats were being detained for want of permits to carry rice, and I would request the House to imagine the loss which the cargo boats have suffered from the 5th of June last up till now. Sir, the matter was referred to Government but Government remained silent. May I ask the Government, Sir, as to what they intend to do with these boats? Can you imagine, Sir, for a moment that from the 5th June up till now they are lying in anchor at different stations while the people of the localities are without any food whatsoever and many of them are dying of starvation? Sir, the merchants purchased these food-grains at Rs. 15 or Rs. 16 per maund and they were to take them to deficit areas in Dacca and in the subdivisions of Madaripur and Goalundo. Sir, if during the present detention of these boats prices come down what will be the effect of that fall in prices upon the traders?

Now, Sir, I come to the question whether there is excess of food in Bengal or whether there is shortage. Sir, so far as the anti-hoarding drive is concerned it was directed not against the capitalist hoarders and big rice dealers but it was directed only against the poor cultivators and growers and house-holders in the interior mufassal. And just before this debate commenced we have heard from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food that the report has come that there is deficit in the Province. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to explain as to how he could think of launching an anti-hoarding drive upon the assumption that there was no shortage? Sir, the Hon'ble Minister waxed eloquent in season and out of season on the question of hoarded rice which was responsible for the present scarcity, and he owes an explanation to the House as to his assumption that there was hoarded rice in the Province. Now that his pet theory of hoarding being responsible for the present sufferings of the people having been exploded, will he now come out with a cut-and-dried scheme as to what he proposes to do in the present circumstances? But, Sir, instead of planning any scheme for the immediate future he has again come out with high hopes about the next bumper *aus* and *aman* crops. This shows that he is incapable of doing anything for the starving people except giving them high hopes. But, Sir, even in the matter of the next *aus* and *aman* crop he is hopelessly ignorant of the actual state of affairs in the countryside. Even the prospects of the next *aus* and *aman* harvest is very gloomy. In the lower *bil* areas in my part of the Province which grow *aus* paddy, it was impossible to have proper sowings in the sowing season which began in the first week of March last due to heavy rains which caused flooding. The fields are still under water and no sowings are possible. This is the condition with regard to the cultivation of *aus* paddy. So far as other areas are concerned, the sowing season commenced in the beginning of April but due to want of rains sowings were late but immediately after the sowing came

in flood-water which submerged the plants. When this is the position in the countryside, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister has come out with high hopes about the next *aus* crop——.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I do hope that the honourable member is not ascribing the failure of *aus* and *aman* crops to political reasons.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: With regard to *aman* harvest, Sir, it is now too early to expect anything——

Mr. SPEAKER: Why are you going into the future which has nothing to do with the subject-matter of the present debate? Let us all hope that we will have better crop this year.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: I have been dealing with this point because the present policy of the Government has been launched on the assumption of a bumper *aus* and *aman* crop this year.

Then, Sir, there has been a terrible cattle epidemic in the mufassal. The cattle epidemic has caused a havoc in four thanas of Madaripur subdivision and in some parts of Bakarganj

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Khondkar, may I just remind you that the question of cattle epidemic is not quite relevant to the present debate.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Sir, I have referred to cattle epidemic because I want to show to the House that due to very heavy loss of cattle the Grow-More-Food campaign is bound to fail. In some parts of Faridpur district, as my friend, Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas, will bear me out, people could not even plough their lands for want of cattle, but Government did not care to help the people to purchase cattle from other places by lending them money in the shape either of agricultural loan or loan from co-operative societies.

Then, Sir, for want of food-grains the poor cultivators have already eaten up their seed-grains and unless and until supply of seed-grains is available from Government there will no sowing of paddy in many parts of the Province. Crores of rupees, I understand, has been provided in the Budget for the supply of seed-grains but although this is the middle of July, no action has been taken by Government for the supply of seed-grains. The sowing season is just expiring in many districts and in others, especially in Bakarganj which is a one-crop district growing *aman* paddy, sowing season has already begun. No distribution of seeds or money for that purpose will be effective and will do any good to the country unless it is taken in hand immediately. Sir, seeds are being purchased and are being distributed through Government official agency. We have the agency of departmental demonstrators whose posts are temporary and who are drawing a salary of Rs. 25 a month. This is the manner in which the Grow More Food Campaign is carried on by this Ministry. This Grow More Food Campaign has failed.

Then, Sir, I have already drawn attention to the policy of Government against the big hoarders and big traders and agents of Government. These agents have been advanced crores of rupees by Government without any interest for purchase of foodstuff and things are not better in any way. With this policy this Ministry cannot expect to improve the food situation.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, I formally move my motion that this Assembly is of opinion that the continued deterioration in the food situation and the prolonged suffering of the people for want of food evidence the failure of the Government to tackle the food problem in the Province. And this Assembly condemns the Government's failure in arranging proper supply of food to the people and urges the Government to declare Bengal as a famine area so as to take upon themselves the full responsibility for feeding the entire population.

Sir, একটা line বলে আমি শেষ করবো। এ পর্যন্ত যতগুলি Communique গভর্ণমেণ্ট বের করেছেন, তাতে সত্যের সন্ধান কিছু পাই নাই। তবে আজ আমাদের মাননীয় সুরাবর্দী সাহেব যে সব জায়গায়ই deficit হয়েছে বলে যে সত্য কথাটা বলেছেন, সত্য কথাটা যে স্বীকার করেছেন, তার জন্য তাঁকে ধন্যবাদ দিচ্ছি।

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Sir, on behalf of the poor people of this Province who cannot afford to purchase rice at the prohibitive price now prevailing throughout the Province, I beg to move that this Assembly is of opinion that Government should immediately promulgate an order under the Defence of India Rules to control the maximum prices of the existing paddy and rice and also of the coming crop of paddy in order to bring down those prices to a level approachable by the poor section of the people of the Province.

Sir, I think I shall not be able to say anything new as to how the people of our Province are suffering for want of food caused by their inability to purchase paddy and rice at prohibitive prices. The Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy in his written statement has said that he has been able to build up small stocks of paddy and rice all over the Province and intends to sell that paddy at Rs. 9 per maund and rice at Rs. 15, but he cannot say that with that stock he will be able to meet the demand of paddy and rice of all the people of this Province. He has left the rest of the supply to the trade, but unfortunately he has not mentioned what prices the trade will be entitled to demand.

Sir, far back in December last when the present paddy crop was being harvested, I put up a proposal before the then Government for taking stock of the food and of controlling the prices. But for some reason or other the last Ministry could not persuade the authorities to do so. Although apparently they were the authorities but for practical purposes the authorities were somebody else and those authorities could not be persuaded to agree to the taking of stock of the entire rice and paddy then existing in this Province. Had such stock-taking taken place at that time, then, Sir, I am sure such a catastrophe would not have fallen. Bengal would then have been known to be a deficit Province, the deficit being of a very high

percentage, and it would have been difficult to rob Bengal of her paddy and rice. That was the reason why the authorities did not like that the stock of paddy should be taken. Now when much of the paddy and rice had been exported out of Bengal and every union had been suffering from serious shortage of food the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy came out to take the stock. A cruel joke indeed! It is clear that he did not intend to take the stock of food. His real intention was to further drive the food out of rural Bengal. I should congratulate Mr. Saheed Suhrawardy for his having successfully driven out food of the rural areas. It is in his own writing—in his statement he says that about 80 to 90 lakhs of maunds of paddy and rice were sold by the rural stockists just before the drive started. May I know, where has that paddy and rice gone? Mr. Suhrawardy says: Before even the drive started persons who held stocks actually sent for their poorer neighbours and lent them sufficient quantities of rice and paddy. The situation was immediately eased and grain began to flow once more into the market and persons who could not procure food were enabled to purchase rice in the market.

Sir, there are representatives of rural areas in this House. I am asking each and every one of the representatives of rural areas who are sitting here whether they subscribe to the statement which has been circulated. (Cries of "Yes" "Yes" from Government benches.) Yes, because you will blindly follow him and because it is your party statement. But, Sir, I am sure—and I can give evidence, if necessary,—that the major quantity of this paddy and rice which had been sold by the rural stockists out of panic just before this drive started were purchased by merchants whom some of my friends have named as Ispahanis, Shaw Wallaces and the like. When food was required to be imported, food was thus driven out of the rural areas by this drive. What was the result? For a few days only while the panicky sale was going on, the price of rice came down by two to three rupees per maund, but as soon as food was taken out of the rural areas, the prices again shot up and now the price-level in rural areas is higher than that in Calcutta. That is the position.

Now, Sir, if the Government want the poor people to live, if they want that the poor people should be able to purchase rice and get their food, then they must control the prices and reduce the prices to a level approachable by the poor people. Or, if the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy wants to adjust his balance-sheet of demand and supply, as mentioned in his written statement, by refusing supplies to the poor people, because the poor people cannot purchase rice at the prevailing prohibitive price, let him say so or instead of saying that even, let him pass an ordinance ordering that the poor people be shot to death because they have no right to exist. Either you shoot them down to death or you must provide some measures by which these poor people may be enabled to get their rice. By these poor people I mean not only the poor agriculturists and the poor labourers but also a large section of the middle class people without any distinction of caste or creed or community. Today even a middle class family whose income is Rs. 100 per month is unable to carry on. I ask the members of this

House how many middle class families earn Rs. 100 a month. Yet take the case of the head of a family whose income is Rs. 100 a month. The average monthly requirement of a family is at least three maunds of rice. If he has to purchase three maunds of rice today, he has to spend Rs. 100 on rice alone. Where is the money left to purchase the other essential requirements of his family? He has struggled hard all these months. Today he is absolutely helpless. Sir, the situation has come to such a pass that some steps must be immediately taken to reduce the prices of food. The Hon'ble Minister should not be content by merely saying that he will sell the small stock of rice in his hand at Rs. 15 per maund. That is a drop in the ocean. The only little quantity of rice still available is with the trade. But he has left the trade free and he has left the price of rice, so far as the trade is concerned, to the law of demand and supply. The supply being shorter than the demand, the trade has raised the price and is not expected to bring it down out of its own accord. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to consider the fact that the trade will not reduce the price unless it is forced by law to do so. Therefore, I want that some legislative measures should immediately be adopted to reduce the price.

Then, Sir, I submit that the price control should be extended to the coming paddy also. I am sure that as soon as next aus crop comes to the market that crop also will sell at the prevailing high rate. When the aman crop will be harvested then that crop also will sell at the prevailing high price if the price is not controlled. I feel, Sir, that today no Ministry, no power on earth can solve the food problem in any country. Every country has for a long time been in deficit of food. Over and above that, the war demands for food have made the position worse. So long as there is war there will be a large demand for war purposes on the food-stuffs of every country. The food required for civil population is bound to fall short in every country. And that has been the position in Bengal also. But I would ask the House to consider this that so long as there is rice available in a shop why is it that we shall have to purchase it at Rs. 35 per maund? A very few are in a position to purchase at Rs. 35 but that does not solve the problem. You have to consider the case of the vast majority of people to whom the price is prohibitive. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to seriously consider their case.

A question may, however, arise: if you control the price there will be a black market. Will the Hon'ble Minister not say that he has been able by his food drive to have control over the hoard? I am sure he will say so. He will say that he has already got a machinery to control the hoard. Then where is the difficulty in controlling the price?

Then, Sir, I would like to criticise the steps taken by the food drivers in rural areas. The Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy appealed to our moneyed countrymen both in the urban and rural areas to co-operate with the Government by coming forward to help the people with supplies of food-stuffs at cheap rates. I know of many countrymen of ours who have been helping the poor people. I shall now tell the House how they have been ill-treated by the food-drivers. I shall cite the case of one gentleman. He is Rai

Satish Chandra Chaudhuri Bahadur of Mymensingh. He is known to many members of this House. He had purchased several thousands of maunds of paddy long before the Hon'ble Minister issued his appeal or started the drive and at a time when paddy was selling at Rs. 9 to Rs. 9-12. He purchased that paddy for selling it at Rs. 8 to the poor people. The quantity of paddy which was in stock after being sold at that cheap rate has been seized and requisitioned. Then again, Sir, he has got a charitable dispensary in his village within Tangail subdivision. He stocked some rice for the consumption of the inmates of that hospital. That rice had been previously seized and requisitioned by the Subdivisional Officer of Tangail about a month or so ago. The Rai Bahadur thereupon approached the Subdivisional Officer and represented that the rice was necessary for the inmates of the hospital. The Subdivisional Officer then enquired and found the representation to be true and accordingly released that rice. But, Sir, again that very rice has been seized and requisitioned by the same Subdivisional Officer in the course of the food-drive. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, he should not be allowed to say things which are not correct.) If my honourable friend wants evidence I can read out paragraphs from the written statement filed by the Rai Bahadur, in the court of that Subdivisional Officer. I have got that document with me and it is here. I can read out what I have said. I am not in the habit of saying untrue or irrelevant things. Now, Sir, I ask—was it for such treatment that the Hon'ble Minister wanted the co-operation of our benevolent countrymen? I want a reply. With regard to the food drive I wish to say something else. My honourable friend Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri has complained that the Food Minister has not submitted the much advertised balance sheet of the requirements and available stock before the House for scrutiny. I want to know here and now from the Hon'ble Minister whether he is prepared to do so. I am sure he is not, because he is not in a position to feed the people of Bengal. If he is not, then he should confess without any hesitation that he has failed to solve the problem. He should, therefore ask the members representing all groups, to join him and evolve a formula as to how to solve this problem. With whatever quantity of paddy and rice we may start, we must evolve a formula as to how to give equitable supplies to our poor people. But that is not possible without an all-party Ministry, because a party Ministry will not dare do many things out of fear of being thrown out, although those things may be urgently and essentially necessary to be done.

There is another point and that is the "Grow-more-food" campaign on which I want to speak. As Bengal stands in need of more food, I suggest that it should be announced by the Government that for the next year no jute should be grown on any land other than those lands on which no other crop except jute can be grown. Sir, if the Government promulgate such an order, they will be able to get about 45 lakhs of acres of land free for paddy cultivation, and that will bring additional 675 lakhs of maunds of paddy to this Province. I am talking about this very seriously. I am a member of the Jute Advisory Board and I know how the resolutions of the

members of the Jute Advisory Board are set at naught by the Government at the instance of the higher authorities and also of the Government Jute Expert. I know that expert officer. He knows nothing about jute. He was asking me the other day "tell me how many seers make a maund" (laughter). I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to seriously consider this question. If more food is to be grown Government should promulgate an order directing the jute-growers not to grow jute on any land other than lands on which nothing but jute can be grown.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope you will not take much more time of the House.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Mr. Speaker, if you so desire I may stop now.

I would now draw the attention of the Food Minister to another point only. He has stated that in order to build up stocks in the rural area he will requisition 25 per cent of the stock which will be found to be above 300 maunds. At one place he has said 300 maunds and at another place he has said 400 maunds. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to explain from whose stock he will requisition this small stock? Is it from the agriculturists and the householders or from the traders? It appears that he has left the trade free. He has said that he will seize and requisition the stock of the traders only if they violate the conditions of licence. How will he then build up the stocks? It seems to me that he will try to build up stocks by taking the rice of the poor householders and agriculturists. His over-zealous food-drivers have already done so to earn the approbation of the Food Minister and to get rewards. It is regretable that yet the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy exults in having succeeded in his food drive. With these words, I beg to commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Adjournment.

The House was then adjourned at 8-50 p.m. till 3-30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 13th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Tuesday, the 13th July, 1943, at 3-30 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 13 Hon'ble Ministers and 194 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Appointment of Accountant in Mymensingh Collectorate.

*57. **Maulvi ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that an employee in the Alipore Collectorate has been appointed by the Collector of Mymensingh as the Accountant of the Mymensingh Collectorate?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason therefor?

(*c*) Is it a fact that two of the three selection grade posts at Mymensingh are at present held by Caste Hindus?

(*d*) Whether in making the appointment existing communal representation was taken into consideration?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (*a*) and (*c*) Yes.

(*b*) Owing to paucity of suitable clerks in the superior scale of the Mymensingh Collectorate fit for appointment as Accountant it was considered necessary to recruit one from elsewhere.

(*d*) The Communal Ratio Rules do not apply to promotions.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have made any definite rules as to the suitability of a candidate for promotion in the Selection Grade?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government made any attempt whatsoever to find out suitable clerks even from the adjoining districts of Dacca and Faridpur before coming to Alipore?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: The selection was made by the Collector, and I am not aware whether any suitable candidate was available in other neighbouring districts.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in the cases of promotions the question of seniority alone is taken into consideration or any other question is taken into consideration?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Both seniority and efficiency are taken into consideration.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is not a single efficient clerk in the whole of the Mymensingh Collectorate to be promoted to the Selection Grade?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It is not possible for me to answer that question. As I have already stated, the Collector has made the selection.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*a*) and (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that all the three Selection Grade appointments are held by Hindus?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to consider the desirability of asking the Collector to report as to whether he made any enquiry to find out if there was any suitable candidate in the Mymensingh Collectorate or in any of the Collectorates of the adjoining districts?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: A report was called for, and the answer is there.

Maulvi ABUL HOSSAIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any attempt was made to find out any suitable Muslim candidate from any other district in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I have already answered that question. I am not aware whether the Collector made any such attempt.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the power of selection for promotion lies only with the local authorities?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: In the case of smaller appointments, generally the selection is made by the local authorities concerned.

Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that nepotism and favouritism are sometimes the most important criteria for the efficiency of a candidate for promotion?

Mr. SPEAKER: I disallow that question.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Alipore clerk was promoted to the Selection Grade in

the Mymensingh Collectorate on the report of the Collector of Mymensingh or was the man transferred from Alipore to Mymensingh on the report of somebody else?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the suitability of a candidate is decided by any test or on mere recommendation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: So far as I am aware in making these appointments merit as well as seniority is taken into consideration.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Sir, my question has not been properly answered. My question is whether suitability is decided by a test or only on the remarks made by the recommending authority?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is the reply he has given. I cannot compel him to give any other reply; you may not be satisfied.

Mr. J. N. GUPTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the selection was done by test?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I do not quite understand what the honourable member means by "test". As I have already stated, both merit and seniority are taken into consideration.

Clerks in the Dinajpur Collectorate.

*58. **Mr. SYAMAPRASAD BARMAN:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of the clerks that are at present serving in the Dinajpur Collectorate;

(*b*) the number of appointments made in the different grades of the Dinajpur Collectorate since the enforcement of the Communal Ratio Rules;

(*c*) the number of these appointments given to—

(1) Caste Hindus,

(2) Muslims, and

(3) Scheduled Castes; and

(*d*) whether the Communal Ratio Rules have been observed in the case of the appointment of Scheduled Castes?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) 129.

(*b*) Lower grade—1.

Sub-grade—15.

Temporary—54.

(*c*) (1) Five appointments in the sub-grade and 19 temporary appointments.

(2) One appointment in the lower grade, eight in the sub-grade and 27 temporary appointments.

(3) Two appointments in the sub-grade and eight temporary appointments.

(*d*) Yes.

Employments in the War Supply Section of the Industries Department.

***59. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of employments in the War Supply Section of the Department of Industries since it is opened;

(*b*) the pay of the different posts;

(*c*) the number of them that are (1) Muslims and (2) Scheduled Castes; and

(*d*) the pay of the posts held by them?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja Shahabuddin): The member is referred to the reply given to starred question No. 88 on the 22nd March, 1943.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JASIMUDDIN AHMED: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he holds the same view as that contained in the reply?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: It is not a question of opinion, Sir, but a question of fact. The matter is receiving my attention and consideration.

War contractors under the Department of Industries.

***60. Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of contractors working in the Department of Industries since the beginning of the War,

(*b*) their names; and

(*c*) the amount of contract given to each?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: The member is referred to the reply given to starred question No. 88 on the 22nd March, 1943.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Appointment of Legal Remembrancer.

29. Mr. ISWAR DAS JALAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Appointment) Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) who is the present incumbent of the post of Legal Remembrancer, Bengal, and when was he appointed to this post;

(*b*) who is responsible for the selection of the present incumbent;

(*c*) was the Hon'ble Minister in charge consulted before the selection was made;

(*d*) has the appointment been made against the advice or recommendation of the Minister in charge;

(*e*) have the claims of any other officer senior to the present incumbent been superseded in effecting the appointment; and

(*f*) what are the considerations which have led to the selection of the present incumbent?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) Mr. W. McC. Sharpe has been officiating in the post since the 29th September, 1942.

(*b*) to (*f*) The attention of the honourable member is invited to section 246(2) of the Government of India Act and to the statements made by two Hon'ble Ministers in this House on the 27th February last.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*b*) to (*f*), do this Government subscribe to the views expressed by the previous Government, namely, that a great wrong was done in rejecting their recommendation that the seniormost officer who was an Indian should be appointed?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The previous Ministry never expressed any opinion that a great injustice was done

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Do I understand that there was no expression of opinion of the then Minister that the rejection of their recommendation was resented to?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: There was no such statement made by the then Hon'ble Minister.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will he kindly look into the file and read from it?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: There is no file here.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Government consider the desirability of reopening the question and of terminating the present officiating arrangement by appointing the seniormost officer to the post?

Khan Bahadur MOHAMMED ALI: The then Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department then made it clear that this appointment was made by His Excellency in his individual judgment.

Unstarred Question No. 30.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: For some unavoidable reasons the Hon'ble Minister is absent.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is held over.

Election of Sherpur Municipality in Mymensingh.

31. Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN (Mymensingh): (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the date on which the election of the Sherpur Municipality in Mymensingh was due; and

(*ii*) whether the election was postponed by a Government order after four commissioners in Wards Nos. 2 and 5 were declared duly elected?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether sitting Chairman and Vice-Chairman of that Municipality are zemindars of Sherpur town;

(*ii*) whether Government are considering the desirability of—

(1) withdrawing the order of postponement,

(2) holding election of remaining other wards within March, 1943,

(3) whether the Collector was consulted before postponement of election, and

(4) whether fresh nomination papers shall have to be filed by candidates if the election is not held within March, 1943?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) (*i*) 11th November, 1942.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) (1) The order of postponement was withdrawn by Government on the 15th February, 1943.

(2) The elections in the remaining wards were held on the 3rd June, 1943.

(3) No.

(4) The postponed elections were continued from the stage at which they were suspended and fresh nomination of candidates was not necessary.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he has received any representation from the ratepayers of the Sherpur Municipality regarding redistribution of wards in that municipality?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Yes.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: What was the nature of the representation received from the ratepayers?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: The representation was for redistribution of the wards in the municipality.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether elections were held on the basis of the old wards or the newly redistributed wards?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: Old wards.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government is prepared to enquire into the complaints made against the Sherpur Municipality?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: As the election has already been held, Government does not think it desirable to make any enquiry at present.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Are Government satisfied that the complaints were baseless or wrong or improper?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: There was no substance in the complaints.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (*ii*)(*3*), will the Hon'ble Minister please state why the Collector was not consulted before the order of postponement was passed?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: The then Hon'ble Minister on receiving the representation from the Caste Hindu ratepayers postponed the election without consulting the Collector

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether Government came to the conclusion that there was no substance in the complaint without making any enquiry into the matter?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: The local officers reported that there was no real grievance of the ratepayers with reference to the election result of the previous terms.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Am I to understand that Government accepted the local officers' views against whom complaints were made?

Khan Sahib HAMIDUDDIN AHMED: For the time being, Government have accepted the report of the local officers.

Extension of time for the submission of report of the Select Committee.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before you proceed, I have got to mention about three Bills that are pending for the submission of report by the Select Committee. These are the Calcutta Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1940, the Bengal Pure Food Bill, 1940, and the Bengal Village Self-Government Bill, 1940.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. What is this new thing coming in?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: This is only for extension of time.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That must be given notice of.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand he is applying to the House for extension of time for submitting the Select Committee Report. The last date fixed for submitting the Report in this House has expired and so he is applying for leave.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, I have something to submit to you before you give your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not going to give any ruling. I am making a statement of facts as I have been able to understand. Now I understand the practice hitherto followed has been that if the House is in session, then this matter comes up before the House without there being anything on the order paper. After question time the Minister in charge who is generally the Chairman of the Select Committee stands up and asks for leave. That has been the practice followed all along. If the House is not in session, then the Speaker by an administrative order extends the time. That has been the practice I am told and in pursuance of that practice I understand the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmad, Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government Department, has been asking for leave in respect of three Bills. That is the position. Dr. Sanyal, have you got anything to say?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Yes, Sir. I submit that the Rules of Business of the Assembly do not provide for such surprises. Whenever there is any intention of Government to have any motion brought up before the House, that will have to be duly given notice of. The notice may be short. In your discretion you can accept short notice. I do not dispute that, but in any case there must be a notice of any motion that is coming up. Except motions of the character of universally accepted motions for obituary notice or things like that which come up at very short notice, all motions must be placed in the members' hands before they are called upon to give their impression or opinion or verdict on such motions.

With regard to this particular motion, we have very serious objection. The position is this. The House two years ago was confronted with a piece of legislation relating to an amendment of the Calcutta Municipal Act and, Sir, very serious objections were then taken even to the introduction of that legislation. Thereafter a Select Committee was appointed with a specific direction given to it that within a particular date the Select Committee must finish its labours and come before the House. A new Ministry came into office thereafter. The Select Committee, I presume, did not meet and, Sir, this House, so far as this Bill was concerned, had no indication of any intention of the last Government to proceed with that measure. The Bill was dead. After the appointment of the Select Committee, two complete sessions—I think more than two—of the House were held thereafter and in regard to Bills in the consideration stage the rule is that if the mover of a Bill does not continue the Bill for two sessions, the Bill automatically stands dead. In view of that I think there must be some notice before we can take up an important matter like this.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think it will be useless waste of time if we go on like this. We have got a very important matter before the House. We may take up this matter tomorrow.

Point of Personal Explanation.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. I am very sorry that I did not know that the House would meet today at 3-30 p.m.——

Mr. SPEAKER: Your question has been held over.

Special Motions on Food Situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us now proceed with the resolutions. All the resolutions have now been moved. They are now open to discussion. Mr. Datta.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a matter which has turned out to be very serious. I really deprecate the spirit of complacency that is to be found in the statement submitted by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies. He is of opinion that the steps that he has taken from time to time have arrested the deterioration at the most crucial moment. I submit, Sir, that it is not a fact that the deterioration has been arrested——

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: The Hon'ble Minister in charge is not here and, I think the House should await the pleasure of his arrival.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think somebody else is watching the proceedings of the House.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: Sir, he is very busy in dealing with an important business

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: I submit, Sir, that the situation has been deteriorating and deteriorating every day, so much so that at present the real picture of the situation has not been told and is not before the Hon'ble Minister. I am afraid that he is not alive to the gravity of the situation. I come from the district of Tippera, and I know the situation that is prevailing in the Chittagong Division. Sir, deaths are occurring in the district of Tippera. There has been a large influx of people from the district of Noakhali—male, female and children. They are all starving. They have got no flesh in their body. The skin has stuck to the bone. Really it is painful to look at the condition of the people; especially, at the Akhaura Station people are dying in great numbers. It is impossible to give the figure, but it is a fact that they are dying not only by hundreds but by thousands. Day before yesterday we found in the paper that the Bar Association of Bhola in the district of Barisal has telegraphed that in the Bhola subdivision of the Barisal district people are dying by thousands. This is the situation. It seems to me that the spirit of complacency that is to be found in the statement does not give the real picture of the situation.

Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies has stated in his report that he has taken steps and he has been completely satisfied. What are the steps that have been taken by the Hon'ble Minister since the Ministry has been formed? We find that the first step is the food drive or the anti-hoarding drive; and the second step is the building up of a stock.

With regard to the first step I should like to say that the food drive has been approached from a wrong point of view. Really it was started on the assumption that there was no shortage of food, but there was hoarding in the mufassal areas——(The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No, no.) Sir, a census was necessary, but the census as taken by the Ministry was a defective census. The Hon'ble Minister has been satisfied with the result, but the result, in fact, is otherwise. Really a proper census has not been taken and the food committees that have been formed are not representative committees. I can tell him from my experience in my own district that real food committees are not being formed after a meeting which is necessary for that purpose. No meeting was held and no representative food committee was formed. This is the situation. To crown all I may say here that as the food drive was going on, the agents from Calcutta were purchasing rice in the mufassal areas. The drive was taken up for the purpose of maintaining the supplies, but instead of supplies being maintained, the supplies have been really withdrawn. Food-grains have been withdrawn from the deficit areas to Calcutta with the result that the already deficit areas have been further denuded of the crop. The drive has a disastrous result, and my honourable friend—no, I do not claim myself to be a friend of his—and the Hon'ble Minister has been very much satisfied with the result.

Another step said to have been taken by this Ministry is this, that he has been able to build up a stock and with regard to this stock I want to put a few questions. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will give replies to these questions. The first question I want to ask is, What per cent. of this stock has been purchased from the mufassal areas and what per cent. of the stock has been purchased from outside the province? Then, Sir, it has been said that Mr. Ispahani had a huge stock at the time when he took up this onerous duty. He says that he has sacrificed about Rs. 40 lakhs. It seems to me that at the time when there was a huge stock in his possession, that stock should have been requisitioned under Rule 75A of the Defence of India Rules for withholding this stock from the market. In many cases stocks of this kind have been requisitioned. I know in Narayanganj a stock of 20,000 maunds has been requisitioned on the ground that the stockist committed an offence under the Food Grains Control Order. His offence was that this stock was withheld from the market for a long period. Now, Mr. Ispahani had a large stock so much so that he could make a profit of Rs. 40 lakhs. That stock was in his possession and certainly he was withholding this stock from the market. That stock ought to have been requisitioned under section 75A of the Defence of India Rules. But this was not done and instead he has been congratulated saying that he is a young man and he has done an onerous duty for helping the poor people of Bengal.

This stock will be utilised, it has been stated in the report, in this way; that "stocks requisitioned from traders who have committed offences under the Food Grains Control Order are to go into a pool from which the needs of the deficit areas will be met by retail sale through controlled shops at the rate of Rs. 9 per maund for paddy and Rs. 15 for rice, for payment of test relief wages in kind." May I know whether any controlled shops have been started in the mufassal areas? (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Don't you know?) In my district no shops have been started in rural areas. I know some controlled shops have been started for the benefit of the privileged classes at the cost of the public of Bengal (Cries of "Shame, shame" from the Opposition benches.) The system is altogether rotten and bad. The Government servants are getting the benefit of these shops. These controlled shops have been started in the mufassal areas, especially in the district areas, for the benefit of the privileged classes at the cost of the public. I know, Sir, that the members of the Bar Association of Comilla wanted to be included in the privileged classes. Do you know, Sir, that the lawyers do not get any support from Government because they are supposed to be anti-Government and that even the teachers, however lowly paid they are, cannot receive any help from the Government as they are also considered to be anti-Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: That is not the Government's fault.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: That shows that you cannot control.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: I know that the District Magistrate stated that a mule was a hundred times more valuable than a non-combatant Indian. This statement was made in a public place by the District Magistrate. This is the real state of things prevailing in the mufassal. You cannot control District Magistrates, you cannot exercise any control over these Imperial officers. They declare publicly that they are Imperial officers and are not therefore bound to obey the edicts of Ministers.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Did he make that statement from the point of view of food consumption?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Yes, this is the report. It is also reported that they support Government servants and are not prepared to treat the members of the public in the same generous way, as according to them the public are anti-Government. These are the two steps on which the Hon'ble Minister in charge has made a statement that he has been completely satisfied in this matter. Sir, there is no reason for congratulation over these two steps. The question is how to tackle the situation. My answer is absolutely clear. To my mind the situation cannot be tackled satisfactorily unless supply is received from abroad. There are plenty of supplies in the sub-continent of India for military requirements more than what is necessary for them. These supplies or a little portion of them may be released for the relief of the civil population of Bengal. If such supplies cannot be obtained, we must necessarily control the price of these foodstuffs and introduce rationing. The policy of the Government of India is

that the maximum price cannot be fixed. We must realise the fact that unless the maximum price is fixed, it is impossible to bring down the level of price. You may have supplies, you may have stocks, but they must be made available to the people at prices which should be within the purchasing power of the people. The situation has greatly deteriorated. When the present Ministry took up office the price of rice was Rs. 22 to Rs. 24. It has now gone up to Rs. 30, Rs. 33, Rs. 34, Rs. 35 and more. In my own district, when I left Comilla, coarse rice was selling at Rs. 32 and medium rice at Rs. 36. In the district of Barisal I had a talk with a manager of a hotel. He said that in his village rice was selling at Rs. 40 per md. The situation has gone beyond control. Control the price, fix the maximum price, obtain supplies from outside and thus try to improve the position.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: How much should it be?

Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: How much?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: I am not going to reply to you. I will reply to the Hon'ble Minister.

Then there is another thing. What is absolutely necessary? The Hon'ble Minister in his report stressed the necessity of growing more food. Unless you take up the "Grow More Food" campaign in all seriousness I do not think it will be possible to deal with the situation satisfactorily. You must bring under cultivation the 25 per cent. of land which is now lying fallow. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to another important point and it is this: They must construct fences under section 13 of the Water-Hyacinth Act in areas where crops are being destroyed by water-hyacinth.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: By whom?

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: By water-hyacinth; this can be stopped by constructing fences, as I said, under section 13 of the Water-Hyacinth Act.

The whole thing is that all the supplies that we may get from abroad must be equitably distributed. Another important point which appears to me is that there should be a change of dietary and if necessary legislation should be introduced in order to put this into effect. Unless these things are done it is not possible to solve the problem. If such a state of affairs would take place in any other country the people there would have risen in revolt. If such things would have happened in England what would have been the situation there? People here are dying by thousands and they will doubtless die by lakhs and the situation may be such that no Government would be able to carry on the administration even for a single day. People must shake off the terror of death. We should also represent to the people to change the diet.

Government must take bold steps to relieve the situation, otherwise there will be no end of troubles. I am afraid if this state of things continue for one or two years more 50 per cent. of the people of Bengal will die of starvation. Today I am speaking here, but it may happen to be my lot

that I may also die of starvation. The situaton demands immediate attention and we must take a dispassionate view of things and save the people of Bengal from disaster that will fall upon them if the situation is allowed to continue any more. We must all sink our political differences and try to find a solution for the disaster that is impending.

Mrs. HEMAPROVA MAJUMDAR: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়, আমি food সম্বন্ধে বলবার জন্য দাঁড়িয়েছি। আজকে বাংলাদেশের food সমস্যার যে নগ্নমূর্ত্তি আমাদের দেশের সামনে দেখা দিয়েছে, সেই food সম্বন্ধে বলতে গেলে অনেক কিছু বলা যায়, যদি সারা দিন ধরেও বলা যায়, তাহলেও বোধ হয় বলা শেষ হয় না।

আজকে আমাদের মন্ত্রী বাহাদুর যিনি food এর control নিয়ে গদির উপর বসে আছেন, তিনি বাংলা দেশবাসীকে বলে বেড়াচ্ছেন "তোমরা কম করে খাও"। তাঁর কাছে আমার জিজ্ঞাস্য, লোকে ফেনের চেয়ে আর কত কি কম খাবে? প্রায়ই দেখা যায় তাঁরা এই কম খাওয়ার কথা মুখেও বলেন এবং কাগজেও লেখেন। তাঁর কাছে আমার নিবেদন, আমি তাঁর কাছে জানতে চাচ্ছি যে, এক পোয়া ফেনের চেয়ে লোকে আর কত কম খেয়ে থাকবে? ওঁরা কলিকাতা নগরীতে বাস করেন, সুতরাং মফঃস্বলের অবস্থা জানেন না যে, সেখানে কত লোক অনাহারে মারা যাচ্ছে। এই যে, কলিকাতায় ওঁরা যে queue system সৃষ্টি করেছেন, সেই queueতে কি ভাবে গ্রাম থেকে, নগ্ন অবস্থায় মেয়েরা তাদের ছোট ছোট, এক মাসের, কুড়ি দিনের এবং দশ দিনের পর্য্যন্ত শিশুদের নিয়ে, দিনের পর দিন, রাতের পর রাত ফুটপাথের উপর শুয়ে আছে, কিছু না খেয়ে, এমন কি সামান্য ভাতের ফেনটুকুও তাদের ছেলেদের মুখে দিতে না পেরে, দুধতো দূরের কথা, তা কি ওঁরা কখনও দেখেছেন? যাঁরা treasury bench এ বসে আছেন এবং house এর member যাঁরা নাকি, গভর্ণমেণ্টকে support করছেন তাঁরা অনেকেই মফঃস্বলের মানুষ। তাঁরা কি একবার চতুর্দিকে ঘুরে দেখেছেন কলিকাতার সহরের কি অবস্থা হয়েছে? আমার বাড়ীর পাশেই একটা queue ছিল, এখনও আছে কিনা জানি না, তবে Lake Market এ এখনও আছে, সে জায়গার কি রকম অস্বাস্থ্যকর অবস্থা; সেখানে লোকেরা কলেরায় মারা যাচ্ছে এবং নানা রকম রোগ ও অসুখ লোকের ভিতর দেখা দিয়েছে। আমরা ঘুরে দেখেছি ফুটপাথে একটা নেকড়া পর্য্যন্ত নেই, যা দিয়ে সেই সব অসহায় মেয়েরা তাদের শিশুদের ঢেকে রাখে। ওঁরা বলছেন control shop খুলেছেন, এবং সেখানে হয়ত দুশো লোককে চাল দিচ্ছেন, কিন্তু, সেখানে হাজার লোক দাঁড়িয়ে আছে সে দিকে কি তাঁদের লক্ষ্য আছে? গ্রামের ছেলে মেয়েরা সকাল থেকে সেই "কিউতে" দাঁড়িয়ে থাকে এক সের চাল পাবার আশায়, তারপর যখন তিনটা বাজলো তখন তাদের বলা হ'ল যে সেদিন আর তাদের চাল দেওয়া হবে না; কিন্তু, তখন আর কি ক'রে তারা গ্রামে ফিরে যাবে, তাই তারা ফুটপাথেই এই রকম অসহায় অবস্থায় পড়ে থাকে। এইভাবে দিনের পর দিন চলেছে এই যে অবস্থা এ সম্বন্ধে ওঁরা কি বলতে চান? যদি সাহস থাকতো ওঁরা এর প্রতিকার করতো এবং যদি Clive Street এর মালিকদের দিকে হা করে, ভোটের জন্য তাকিয়ে থাকতে না হতো, তাহলে আমি জোরের সঙ্গে বলতে পারি এ দেশের food এর অবস্থা এই রকম আকার ধারণ করতো না। আজকে ওঁরা মফঃস্বলে food drive করতে গিয়েছেন, কিন্তু কলিকাতা ও হাওড়াকে কেন এই scheme থেকে বাদ দেওয়া হ'ল, সেটা কি বলতে পারেন? কেন কলিকাতায় drive করতে সাহসী হ'ননি? তা করতে সাহস হতো, যদি Clive Street এর মালিকদের উপর নির্ভর করে থাকতে না হতো, যদি

all-party Ministry করতেন তাহলে আমার বিশ্বাস এই খাদ্য-সমস্যার অনেকটা সমাধান ওঁরা করতে পারতেন। মন্ত্রী মহাশয়, আপনারা মফঃস্বলে যান না, সেখানকার যে, কি অবস্থা তা' আপনারা উপলব্ধি করতে পারবেন না। সেখানে ছোট ছোট শিশুরা আজ না খেতে পেয়ে মারা যাচ্ছে, মেয়েদের লজ্জা নিবারণের সামান্য বস্ত্র পর্য্যন্ত নেই। স্পীকার মহোদয়, আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করতে চাই এই যে অবস্থা এর জন্য দায়ী কে? আমি বলবো এখানে দাঁড়িয়ে যাঁরা এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল গঠন করেছেন তাঁরাই দায়ী। আমি বলছি, দেশের লোককে ভাঁওতা দিয়ে, খবরের কাগজের ভিতর দিয়ে প্রচার করে "আমি এ করবো, সে করবো" বলে আর বেশী দিন তাদের ভুলিয়ে রাখতে পারবেন না। সকল কিছু ভোলানো যায়, কিন্তু পেটের ক্ষুধাকে ভোলানো যায় না। আজকে যে পেটের ক্ষুধা জ্বলে উঠেছে তাকে ভাঁওতা দিয়ে মিটাতে পারবে না। এটা তো একটা চাকরী বা ভিক্ষা নয়, যে "আজ নয় বাবা, কাল দেবো" এ কথা বললে চলবে, ক্ষুধার সমাধান এক্ষুণি করতে হবে। স্পিকার মহোদয়, আমি এই কথা বলছি, আমি অনুরোধ করছি, আজকে যাঁরা treasury bench এ বসে আছেন, এই যে মায়া-সাগরে ডুবে আছেন, তা থেকে তাঁরা একবার ভেসে উঠুন। যাঁরা দেশের লোককে খাবার দেবো বলে এখানে এসেছেন, তাঁরা, তাদের দিকে দৃকপাত না করে এই বসে আছেন (laughter)। এখন হাসলে চলবে না। পেটের জ্বালা বড় জ্বালা, তাকে মেটাতেই হবে। শুধু গদিতে বোসে বসে হাসলে চলবে না। দেশের আবালবৃদ্ধবনিতা সকলেই খাবার চাচ্ছে। তাদের খাবার দিতে হবে। আজকে যাঁদের হাতে খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধানের ভার তুলে দেওয়া হয়েছে তাঁরা সৌধশিখরে বসে হাসছেন, ক্ষুধিত, ক্লিষ্ট, রুগ্ন জনসাধারণের দুঃখ, বেদনা বুঝতে পারছেন না। তা'নাহ'লে তাঁরা এই কথা কখনও বলতে পারতেন না, যে "হে দেশবাসী, তোমরা কম করে খাও"। তাই, আবার আমি সেই কথা বলছি, যাদের ভাগ্যে দিনে এক পোয়া ভাতের ফেন জোটে না, তারা আবার কি কম করে খাবে? আমি এর উত্তর চাই। এখন, একমাত্র ঘাস আছে। উনি হয়তো বলবেন, বর্ষাকালে খুব ভাল, তাজা ঘাস উঠেছে, সেই নরম ঘাস তোমরা সিদ্ধ করে খাও। সেইটাই বোধ হয় এখন ওঁদের বলতে বাকী আছে। স্পিকার মহোদয়, তাই আমি House এর মারফতে যাঁরা এখানে বসে আছেন, সকলকে নিবেদন করবো, পেটের ক্ষুধার যে জ্বালা তাকে বাক্যে, কাগজের প্রচারে ও লেখনীতে, এবং ভাষায় মিটাতে পারবে না, তাদের সামনে খাবার দিতে হবে। আজকে আর লজ্জা করে চুপ করে বসে থাকলে চলবে না, সারা বাংলাদেশকে famine area বলে declare কোরে বাংলাদেশের লোককে খাইয়ে রক্ষা করুন, এই বলে আমি, আমার বক্তৃতা শেষ করছি।

Mr. MONMOHAN DAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the most burning question of the day is the question of adequate food-supply and the calamity with which the country is now faced has reached its climax. Today the question is not whether there is hoarding, and whether that hoarded rice can meet the requirements of Bengal. It is now an admitted fact that there is deficit everywhere in Bengal, and that the worst sufferers are no doubt the poorer and the backward section of the people. As a representative of the scheduled castes who are the poorest and the most affected section of the people of Bengal I think I shall be failing in my duty if I do not give an expression to my feelings on this most burning question of the day. Sir, I have had personal experience of the horrible picture in the mufassal of suffering humanity as a result of the present day acute food shortage. On the top of that, Sir, came the anti-hoarding drive of the Hon'ble Minister which was

directed not towards the capitalist hoarders of Calcutta but against the poor agriculturists in rural areas, 99 per cent. of whom were on the verge of starvation, not to speak of surplus stocks lying with them. As you know, Sir, 75 per cent. of the actual tillers of the soil have been reduced to the position of day labourers. They are all starving or are having at most half a meal a day. Furthermore, it is a dire tragedy today that the female section of agricultural labour is not in a position to come out of their houses for want of cloths to secure their daily bread by manual labour. Can anybody imagine that the poorer section of poor Bengal are able to obtain their daily rice at the unprecedented and abnormal price of Rs. 37 per maund that is now prevailing in Bengal? Sir, I agree with the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy that the food question should be promptly and adequately tackled, but I cannot congratulate him for his blaming the farmers and peasants for hoarding rice. I quite appreciate that the duty of Government should be in the first instance to come to a solution by taking a bold stand; they should take a complete stock of the entire foodstuff available in the province; they should make a correct estimate as far as possible of the actual requirements of the province as a whole and then they must make the best effort to feed the hungry people of the deficit areas by bringing in food from the surplus areas of the province, from other provinces and from abroad. Sir, the anti-hoarding drive has proved itself to be a failure in that it has not brought in hoarded rice as had been expected by Government. Now, Sir, there is no other course open to Government but to adopt rationing for the whole of Bengal. The scheme of the Government in the matter of rationing should be on the basis of ten chattaks for every adult male, seven chattaks for every adult female and six chattaks for every child. In this connection, Sir, I may refer to the recent statement of the Hon'ble Minister that people must economise in their use of food even to the extent of using less than what is absolutely necessary. I feel myself inclined to ask Mr. Suhrawardy whether he is prepared to deny himself the pleasure of his dainty dishes, his tea, his *sharbat* and his other luxuries which he is in the habit of enjoying times without number. I think I should not be wrong to say that the rural Bengal labourers take their food at least thrice a day and at each meal they take 8 to 10 chattaks and the children from the age of one begin to take rice. This anti-hoarding drive and the rationing formula have created panic in the minds of the poor agriculturists.

Sir, the last Ministry in reply to questions and answers and during debate, both inside and outside the House, declared that Bengal is a deficit province, but I do not understand what is the motive behind this Ministry. As soon as this Ministry came into office the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies and the Ministry as a whole declared that there is no deficit in Bengal. I think I shall not be wrong in saying that only with a view to cloak the real thing and to dupe the rural masses they have not declared that Bengal is a deficit province. They did not dare because of the fact that a time will come when they will have to be in charge of rationing all over the province.

Sir, before I take my seat I would like to appeal to my friends of the Scheduled Castes by giving a reference to a particular leaflet that was published by the Government in the Department of Agriculture and Industries from which we find something which is contradictory to the statement of the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies, that Bengal is not a deficit province. From this booklet which has been published for the purpose of "Grow More Food" campaign we find that Bengal is really a deficit province in respect of many important foodstuffs. This is what is stated therein: "Though the poets have described Bengal as 'a land of flowing rivers, smiling fields, and radiant skies' it is a tragedy that she does not produce enough food-stuffs required for her population. And not to speak of any 'luxury food' she has to depend very largely upon outside supply even for some items of food which are necessary to enable her population to keep body and soul together. For example, she imports, on an average, about 412 lakhs maunds of rice from Burma and other places. In other words, taking the consumption of rice at an average rate of 6 maunds per head per year about 68 lakhs of people will go without any food and will die of starvation if this supply is not available. And this figure represents about 1/10th of the population of the province. Can any more unsatisfactory state of things be imagined?"

I would like to refer this to my honourable friends of the Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled Castes are the poorest section and they are the most suffering section. I understand they comprise 1/5th of the total population of the province. If any section is to die for want of food, if any section goes without food, it is the Scheduled Castes, and it is the first and foremost duty of the Scheduled Castes to co-operate in solving the food problem. During the time of the previous Ministry we were opposed to them on the ground that that Ministry could not solve the problem At that time rice was selling at the rate of Rs. 15 per maund. It has now gone up to Rs 30 or Rs. 35 per maund, still my friends are waiting for the mercy of the present Ministry.

Maharajadhiraja Bahadur UDAY CHAND MAHTAB, of Burdwan: Mr. Speaker, Sir, much has already been said on the floor of this House with regard to the failure of Government to tackle the food situation properly, and several resolutions also have been moved to the same effect. Moreover, in a recent statement in the House the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies admitted that as a result of the statistics available so far, as a result of the recent food drive practically deficits have been reported in all places and districts. In view of this statement I am afraid that we must presume that in spite of the Government's drive against hoarders and in spite of the inter-provincial barrier having been dropped for a free circulation of food-grains we have still not enough to meet our requirements in these abnormal times when over and above the feeding of the normal population of Bengal, Government have to consider the huge amount of food-stuff required for the ever increasing number of military and evacuees who have settled down in this province for the duration of the war.

Sir, may I through you remind the House that I gave a note on the food problem in Bengal as far back as the 23rd February, 1943, in which I pointed out a certain percentage of deficit to the then Ministry and after a lot of discussions pointed out the possibility of a shortage. Although the then Government disagreed with my percentage they still held that Bengal should be considered a deficit province so far as the position of rice was concerned. Sir, I do not intend to dilate in detail upon the statistics contained in that note of mine this afternoon, for in view of what the Hon'ble Minister said on the floor of the House yesterday it now appears that although the present Government have not attempted to declare that this is a deficit province it is quite clear that our demands are much greater than our supplies or stocks. There is no doubt that today there is not only a very great shortage of the staple food-grains in our province, but I do not think I would be far wrong if I say that the Government will probably, although it is trying to put off the evil day, have to declare famine conditions in certain areas of the province. What is preventing this declaration? The present drive against hoarders, a term which has led to much criticism and sarcasm, has yielded according to the Hon'ble Minister seven or eight million maunds of rice. Even if this be true, there is no doubt that if we take into consideration the actual deficit as disclosed by the recent food drive we are still not totally out of the woods.

Sir, I think that the high price of food grains and the subsequent shortage was due to the lack of an adequate policy of control on the part of Government. Big employers of labour were allowed to purchase any amount of food-stuffs for stocking and distributing amongst their employees who are supposed to be engaged in essential services for the furtherance of war efforts. I do not grudge them being allowed to purchase and stock food-grains and give it at controlled rates to their employees. But some limit should have been put upon the amount they could buy and stock. I am afraid Government too have bought up a lot of foodstuff for the same reasons. I wonder whether we can call these two people hoarders. Coming from a rural area as I do, I must say that whatever little stocks the poor agriculturists had in this area have more or less been taken over as a result of this drive and if proper control is not exercised by Government I am afraid that the result will be that the people in the rural area will feel the pinch much sooner than those living in Calcutta or those who are employed by Government or big firms. I would request the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies to pay special attention to what I have said and try and prevent this sort of unsystemetic method in trying to get together as much rice as they can lay their hands upon in order to meet the demands of the people. They should consult their District Officers and ask them to submit schemes of requirements of the particular area first before taking away surplus stocks, if any.

Sir, I do not know why Calcutta and Howrah have been left out of this drive. As this is a very curious matter I do not propose to draw hasty conclusions or to cast any reflections as to the reasons why this was done, for I think it is up to all of us to try our best to help in solving this most

difficult problem. Casting reflections on the past Ministry or mud-flinging at the present Ministry, I am afraid, will not solve the problem, nor do I think this drive of Government will be successful without getting adequate supplies from other provinces. I do not know whether even that will help in meeting our demads. Although many years ago, Burdwan was known as the granary of Bengal, today it is more a myth than a fact and I hope Government will not fleece this district in such a way that the inhabitants might be the first to face starvation. There can be no analogy between East and West Bengal, for in West Bengal we get very little *aus* crop" and in consideration of the present state of affairs prevailing in West Bengal I would like to impress upon the Government the needs of carrying on relief works till the next harvest, that is, till December to save the people from utter ruin and starvation.

Sir, I am afraid that in all fairness we should say that the Central Government is also responsible for the shortage of food in this province. Unless the Central Government has proper schemes it would be very difficult for any Provincial Government to tackle this very serious problem adequately and satisfactorily. Even if the Central Government took charge of supplying the extra population of our province, I mean the military and the evacuees, etc., I am sure it would give some relief to the Provincial Government if they were not responsible for supply to this extra population.

Sir, I am sorry for having taken up so much time. But before I conclude, may I in all earnestness ask the Government to treat this matter with all seriousness and to forget party politics and help to save the millions of the province from starvation? I am afraid there are still some people who think that it is not true that many people in the rural areas are practically living on one meal a day and some are not lucky enough to get that even. I am sure that if anybody has seen the sites near dustbins in this city where half-starved women and children in the midst of filth hunt for a small morsel of food, they will realise that there is a very great deal of truth in what is said. Moreover, the increase of crimes and lootings are also another factor which gives us the idea that conditions are such that certain people for reasons of want have to resort even to looting and theft. So there is no doubt as to how serious the whole situation is. I only hope that although the Government has been unable to formulate a satisfactory solution of the food problem so far, they will try and do it as soon as possible for further delay will not only lead to calamity but may even lead to the disintegration of the Ministry. (Applause from the Opposition Benches.)

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, now it is admitted on all hands that there is heavy shortage of foodstuff, particularly of rice in the province of Bengal. I appreciate the compiling of a complete census of food requirements, food stocks and seeds and seed requirements and the organisation of food committees and the plan to bring about through the food committee an equitable distribution of food.

This drive has practically demonstrated what we were telling beforehand. We from Bakarganj waited upon the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies and the Hon'ble Chief Minister in May last on deputation and tried to convince them that Bakarganj which was at one time supposed to be the granary of Bengal was a deficit district and further export from that district should be stopped but the export was going on even after that. Although official correct information is wanting, it is rumoured that the deficit in Bakarganj district has been to the extent of nearly 70 to 80 lakhs of maunds if not more even according to the subsistence ration laid down in the scheme of the anti-hoarding drive. I repeat, Sir, what I said on the floor of this House on the 26th February, 1943, that the districts of Bengal were surplus or deficit only relatively and if proper statistics were taken it would be seen that all the districts are deficit. Bakarganj was wrongly declared a surplus district although statistics of the Agriculural Department even did not permit that. We repeatedly asked the Government not to lift the embargo but it was done. Even before the embargo was placed late in January, 1943, large quantities had already been exported and during this short embargo period large quantities went out by permit system, on the requisition of other districts and also by other nefarious methods and when the embargo was lifted the flood-gates of exports were open through the agency of the Government of India and possibly of the Government of Bengal as well and the so-called free trade. I doubt very much how far the neighbouring districts were benefited. I would pause for a reply from Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas who was crying hoarse for lifting the embargo. These agents purchased any available rice at any price, resulting in the shooting up of prices beyond the reach of the common run of people.

Further free trade for which Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas was crying hoarse exploited the situation and helped the exports on receiving commission. These dishonest people of the free trade cared more for their money than for catering to the needs of the people. These traders even the Bagu merchants did not care to store any rice; they thought it safer to act as commissioned agents as the rice hoards might be seized by the Government as it was done during the food crisis of September, 1942. Bakarganj, Sir, was depleted of whatever rice it had and I will be failing in my duty also if I do not say that for want of proper propaganda beforehand the ignorant and illiterate cultivators did not understand the implications of the anti-hoarding drive and in utter ignorance being apprehensive that even their little stocks would be seized some of them sold away their stocks just before the anti-hoarding drive. The result can be more imagined than described. By the uncontrolled drainage from a relatively surplus area Government have brought down all the districts to more or less the same level, and the magnitude of the problem has thereby been increased.

Now that the requirements have been found out and the food census taken it is only the determined surplus that should be allowed to be taken out in future.

There are actual famine conditions prevailing in some parts of the district. Of this Bhola, Sadar subdivision, Pirojpur north and some parts of Patuakhali deserve mention. I have toured in Bhola and Sadar north and had reliable reports of actual death from starvation. There are lots of destitute, diseased men, women and children and a good lot of ablebodied with famine-stricken looks and, finding no work to do, are going without food. They are also unable to do any physical labour. There are women who are unable to go out even for the purpose of begging owing to the want of even rags to cover their shame. It is a fact that girls and women are beeing taken from Bhola to Kalaiya side in Patuakhali subdivision and practically sold. Some people have been compelled under the circumstances to divorce their wives for being unable to maintain them. A lot of people have been taking uneatables and are being victims of cholera and other stomach troubles. It is a fact that in one place people took meat of dead cows only to save their lives. Even after midnight I personally heard the piteous wails of starving persons when I was in the town of Bhola. Gruel has become a rare commodity and an object of quarrel between beggars. We and the District Officers wanted sufficient money for test relief and we got only Rs. 50,000 which was spent in Bhola alone in a few days and there 78,083 adults, 500 females and 8,484 children worked up to 3rd July, 1943, and taking two children into one adult the average wage per head per day was only annas 8-3. Another fifty thousand was sanctioned but it is extremely inadequate. To add to this. Severe cattle epidemic has been raging for months and unless sufficient agricultural loan is provided for the purchase of cattle and even for the sustenance of the bigger cultivators, not to speak of growing more food, there will be very little food grown in the district. Agricultural loan has been asked for, and about a month back gratuitous relief was asked for by the District Officers but up till now I find that no gratuitous relief has been provided by the Government. Private charity has been absolutely exhausted. Government should take immediate steps for procurement of good food-grains by negotiations with other provinces of India as they have already started and also with the allied countries such as America, Australia and Canada, and the supplies should be equitably distributed on a well-planned and well-rationed basis through these food committees which have been formed with some members added to it, if considered necessary.

The Government should also adopt an effective plan of fixation of statutory prices of all articles of daily use which should be enforced, with a penal provision during the abnormal times of war. The Government should also guarantee to the cultivators the minimum purchase prices of food crops in the villages and also the maximum sale prices to the consumers. The food committees can be easily converted into co-operative supply societies and stores all over Bengal. Share money would not be wanting. Well-to-do people will come under the scheme. The Government can also render financial assistance in the shape of interest-free loans. So, sufficient funds should be available to purchase food-grains in the villages during the next harvest and to loan them or sell them at cheaper rates. This can also be the buying agency of the Government also.

Lastly, I will try to impress upon the Government of extending canteen privileges to the employees of the local bodies, such as district boards, municipalities and dispensaries. They are all doing works of public utility. I am afraid that with the half-fed or starving employees of the local bodies the administration is bound to suffer or even to collapse.

Mr. C. GRIFFITHS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out that with the loss of Burma the food problem for Bengal becomes absolutely hopeless. The "Grow More Food" Campaign last year succeeded in placing 76 lakhs of acres under cultivation for rice and millets. This increase was secured by substituting food crops for money crops and as much as 36 lakhs of rupees was paid by the Government as subsidies. Therefore, we find that all land with reasonable irrigational facilities was already under cultivation and any further increase of acreage is practically impossible.

Let us therefore face stern facts: (1) What is the normal rice crop of Bengal? (2) What are the present requirements? (3) What was last year's crop? (4) What is the deficit? (5) Last and not least what is the remedy? Sir, stern measures are necessary if we wish to save Bengal. I would ask the members of the House not to shirk their responsibility and duty. We have no better illustration of the saying "while Rome was burning Nero was fiddling". Here, Sir, it is while Bengal is starving the leaders are squabbling. (Laughter.)

The normal rice crop of Bengal is about 85 lakhs of tons. This would allow a population of 50 million people each 1/2 seer of rice per day and judging from what the Police authorities are allowing the Civic Guard, under my control at Entally, 9 chittaks per day; this estimate appears to be correct. Again since 750 lakhs of acreas all over India yield 250 lakhs of tons of rice, therefore, 3 acres yield 1 ton of rice and as the entire area under cultivation of rice in Bengal is not more than 240 acres, therefore, our estimate of 85 lakhs of tons would not be unreasonable.

The present requirements for Bengal must be abnormal. Calcutta was the great distributing centre of all rice imported from Indo-China, Siam and Burma to various parts of India, especially to Cochin, Travancore and Ceylon. Then there was Persia, Iraq, Arabia, East Africa, South Africa and Mauritius all of which depend on Bengal for their rice. If we take a moderate estimate of their needs and place their requirments for 10 million people at ½ seer per head we would need 1/5th more of our normal crop, that is, 17 lakhs of tons and if we were to further calculate the demand for evacuees and the army taking it at only 3 lakhs of tons, we would roughly need 105 lakhs of tons of rice. So we begin with a deficit of 20 against 85 lakhs of tons. But what was our actual rice crop for 1942-43—only 69 lakhs of tons! This is the figure supplied by experts like Major-General Wood and Mr. D. N. Sen of the National Chamber of Commerce, because they calculated that the Midnapore and Orissa cyclones destroyed about 15 lakhs of tons. We need not consider what was carried over from the previous year because Burma was in the hands of the Japs by May, 1942, 7 months before the harvest. The *ex*-Premier, Mr. Fazlul Huq, warned the House this year (1943) in February before the budget discussion began of the

serious food shortage due to the supplies of rice being entirely cut off from Burma and other eastern countries. But what steps were taken by our leaders? None. There was no constructive work but only destructive criticism offered. The Chamber of Commerce, businesslike, immediately made provision for their labour staff so that industrial centres would not be disorganised and our war efforts hampered in any way. The utility services followed suit and so did the Calcutta Corporation mainly to keep their scavengers at work. Then came the army with their requirements. Indian troops at every theatre of the war had to get their supplies. Food is a most powerful weapon of war. Napoleon said, the army marches on its stomach.

Next came the demand from Ceylon and other overseas countries which got their regular supplies from us. Could Bengal refuse their wants? If so, what right have we to expect rice from Assam, Bihar and Orissa and to get wheat from the Punjab and millets from Bombay? Free trade means "give and take" and not only "take". Last of all, the Government stepped in with their control shops to help some of the poor, leaving the rest to look after themselves. These half measures immediately shot prices up. The law of supply and demand drew out stocks. Hoarding and the black market became the order of the day, and then followed the mysterious resignation of the Fazlul Huq Ministry for an all-parties Government.

Now, Sir, is the present Ministry an all-parties Government? (A VOICE: No.) And can the present Ministry solve the food situation? If we all must suffer, we all should take responsibility. It seems impossible to solve the problem. Miracles cannot be performed today. The price of rice has risen to Re. 1 per seer. This should be controlled to help the poor. This is only July. What reserve has the Government? We have to face five more months of scarcity before the next harvest is gathered in. It seems fearful to picture what the suffering of the poor will be. Substitutes like wheat and millet may help with rationing all round, but I have my doubts of any great success. The root cause has been the loss of Burma brought about by anti-British propaganda. The politicians to whom the British surrendered power are responsible for the present state of affairs. (Applause from the Government Benches.) The only remedy now is to find a strong man with pro-British tendencies who can unite the people, working with Hindus, Muslims and the British. This is a national crisis and we demand a National Government—a Government that is not strong to include Christians comprising of Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indians has no right to our vote. At this stage we cannot have a communal Government. History does not record a single instance of civilised people enjoying peace and harmony when one race or community is singled out for hatred. The Indian nation is a mixture of Dravidian, Mongoloid and Aryan races. Who are the Aryans? Not only Hindus, but Persians, Afghans and the Anglo-Saxon people. If we were to consider the invasion of the Arabs and the Turks and take into account the different communities, India would be best described as a Noah's ark of races, because as many as 222 different languages are spoken here. Then why this hatred for a particular class of Aryans? By Bengalees claiming to be Indians, countrymen with the

Pathans, Punjabi Muslims, Sikhs, Rajputs, Marhattas and Gurkhas, do they become overlords of these martial races? The self-government, the equality we enjoy, is the gift of the overlords whom we wish to drive out of the country. (Cries of "Hear, hear".) Let us again face stern facts. Who is to be the paramount power here? It took China years of civil war before Marshal Chiang Kai Shek became overlord with his party and then we find Japan attacking her. The leaders should call a halt and not sacrifice their misguided and helpless supporters. It is a dreadful price to pay for those who preach racial hatred, indulge in political blackmail and extort from weak Governors and Viceroys positions to suit their selfish ends. It appears that Nemesis has now come to deliver her retributive justice. It is gratifying to find that the Nawab of Murshidabad presided over a meeting at the Town Hall on Sunday, the 11th instant, when the Metropolitan, the Mayor of Calcutta Mr. Badrudduja, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee and others attended, emphasizing the need of communal unity among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists.

Yes, Sir, let us unite and drive the enemy out of Burma. Mr. Fazlul Huq was on the Viceroy's Defence War Council. He is surely pro-British. Why can he not come across with his group of Ministers, including the Christians who hold 31 seats comprising Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indians, and join hands with Sir Nazimuddin? Let our slogan be—England for ever: India for Indians: all for the Empire. (Cheers and applause.) Then there will be no need of food drives under the *tucktaposh*. We could then proudly exclaim—

The drive of Mr. Suhrawardy
Will now be up the Irrawaddy
To give us rice,
At pre-war price.

(Laughter and applause. Cries of "Well said".)

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the food problem is the most acute problem is admitted on all hands. Since the inauguration of the present Ministry there has been statements and counterstatements as if the solution of the food problem entirely depended on the issue of statements. The last statement that has been presented to the House by the Hon'ble Minister clearly indicates that what is good to one is death to another. Mr. Monmohan Das has already stated that during the last discussion on a special motion on the food problem members who are now on the Government side were in the Opposition and they levelled criticisms against the activities of the then Government. The same thing has happened now. I ask my honourable friends opposite to request the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food and his friends to take a note of the criticisms that they had levelled against the then Ministry when they were in the Opposition, and if they can do that the problem will be easily solved. Sir, the irony of fate is that although at that time the then Hon'ble Minister and his supporters declared that Bengal as a whole was a deficit province though some of the districts were surplus districts, and they were censured for their

failure to tackle the food question properly, the statement made by the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy on his assumption of office as Food Minister was that there was no deficit and that the present food crisis has arisen as a result of rice being hoarded by capitalists and merchants, which on the results of his pet anti-hoarding drive has been proved to be incorrect. In spite of Mr. Suhrawardy's failure to find out hoarded rice and his admission that Bengal is a deficit province he is still being supported by my friends opposite although that was the very ground on which they opposed the late Ministry.

Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has said that there is deficit in Bengal, but he has not yet given any idea as to what exact amount of rice is required for the entire population. When there is a deficit which has now been admitted by all, our first and foremost duty would be to find out what is the amount of that deficit and how to meet that deficit. That can be done in different ways. The first thing is to get rice, if possible, from outside. You have read in papers, Sir, that the Assam Government has asked the Central Government to get rice from Brazil and if they get it from there, a part of that rice should be reserved for Assam. It clearly indicates that Assam is not prepared to give its own rice to Bengal. So is the case with Bihar and Orissa. It should therefore be our duty to get rice from outside, whether from other provinces or from outside India. If it is possible to get food from Australia that should also be tried. Unless food-stuffs are imported from outside our people will die. If for argument's sake it is said that it is not possible to get food from outside, in that case our duty will be to see how with our existing food-grains we can survive the difficult times ahead. This, Sir, is possible only by rationing. But in the matter of rationing what we have seen is that rationing has not at all been in the interests of the poor, as, for example, I can say that Khan Sahib Mafizuddin Ahmad has god a card for paddy and rice from the Controller and the same is the case with Khan Sahib Fariduddin Ahmad of the Legislative Council but this poor person, Shahedali, has not got a card. I ask, why this is so? With all the power that I can command I beg to request the Hon'ble Minister to see that there is no distinction in the matter of rationing of food, which should be distributed without any distinction whatsoever so that all can get rice in proper quantity.

Now, Sir, Government should also stop all sorts of exports from the province. During the time of the last Ministry rice has been exported outside Bengal without their knowledge and sometimes with their knowledge. Some officers have been appointed by the Central Government to take away rice from this province. This allegation we have heard and when this was levelled gainst the last Ministry, there was no answer. I should ask the Hon'ble Minister that the same thing should not be indulged in and that rice or any other foodstuff should not on any account be exported from this province.

Sir, I should like to refer to another thing. Black markets should be stopped. I should say that a genuine attempt should be made to stop the black markets. In the statement we have heard so much about

Mr. Ispahani. He was willing to give a go-by to the extent of Rs. 40 lakhs. Messrs. Ispahani & Co. have been here for a number of years but what have they done to the people of Bengal in the past? Have they done anything for the people of Bengal at the present moment? I should say that if they want to do anything, let them do it in a public way. If they do anything in a private way, that should not get any place in the White Paper.

Now, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the fact that at the time of the food drive, they instructed their officers to distribute rice according to the number of members in the family. Now, cultivators, besides members of their families, have generally a number of labourers for their cultivation work. There has been no provision for them and as a result the poor cultivators could not get anything for the labourers and the result has been that they have not been able to harvest their crop for want of food for the labourers. This is essentially necessary. Suppose a middle class family has got ten members. It will require X amount of rice and for the labourers it will require Y amount of rice, but the people who went to ascertain the quantity of rice required have taken into account the X amount of rice but did not take the Y quantity into account. So, it will be impossible for the cultivators to harvest their crops in future.

Another aspect of the problem, Sir, is the "Grow More Food" campaign and that should be done seriously. The cultivation of jute should be reduced to a great extent. If you say "Grow More Food" and at the same time you say that there should be more acreage for jute, it will do no good. So, I would request the Hon'ble Minister to see that the "Grow More Food" campaign is attended to in right earnest.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED: মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব। সর্ব্বসাধারণের খাদ্য-সরবরাহ বিভাগের মাননীয় মন্ত্রী খাদ্য সম্বন্ধে যে ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন কোরেছেন এবং যে মজুদ-বিরোধী আন্দোলন বা খাদ্যাভিজান সুরু কোরেছেন তার ফল কি দাঁড়িয়েছে পল্লী গ্রামের চাষীদের ভিতর—সে কথাটা আমি পরিষদে বোলবো। এই মন্ত্রী মহোদয় যখন মন্ত্রিত্বের গদি থেকে বিতাড়িত হোয়েছিলেন, তখন বাংলার চাষীদের ঘরে ঘরে বিশেষ কোরে মুসলমানদের দুয়ারে দুয়ারে মায়াকান্না কম কাঁদেন নাই, এবং বোলেছিলেন "আবার যদি সেই গদিতে বোসতে পারি, তাহলে তোমাদের সোণার থালায় ভাত খাওয়াবো, এবং রূপার গেলাসে জল খাওয়াবো।" এখন সেই গদিতে বোসে তাদের খাওয়াবার যে দশ ছটাক থেকে ছয় ছটাক চাউলের ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন তাতে তারা সন্তুষ্ট হোয়েছে কি না—ডাকাতি আসামীর মতন বন্দুকধারী সিপাহী ও পিস্তলধারী চাপরাসীদের দ্বারা ঘেরাও না হোয়ে আমার মতন খালি পায়ে খালি গায়ে চাষীদের ভিতরে যান এবং জিজ্ঞাসা করুন তারা এ ব্যবস্থায় সন্তুষ্ট আছে কি না? তাহলে চাষীরা তার উত্তর মুখে দেবে না, আঙ্গুল ধানের নাড়া ক্ষেতে হাল বাইয়ে ও ক্ষেতের বাতড়ে মাটী কাটায়ে ছেড়ে দেবে। একটী চাষীর খোরাক এক দিনে কত লাগে শিক্ষা দিয়ে দেবে। তিনি বরাদ্দ কোরেছেন দশ ছটাক, সাত ছটাক, ছ ছটাক—এ তো গেলো খোরাকী। চাষীদের বাজার সওদার ব্যবস্থা কোথায়? ফকীরের ভিক্ষা কোথায়? অতিথি, প্রবাসীর খোরাকী কোথায়? চাকরের মাইনে কোথায়? দিন মজুরকে তারা দেবে কি?

গভর্ণমেণ্ট চাইছেন—চাষীরা অতিরিক্ত খাদ্য উৎপাদন করুক। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান ব্যবস্থায় চাষীরা সংকল্প কোরেছে—ঐ আধ সের দশ ছটাক হিসাবে তাদের যা দরকার মাত্র তাই উৎপাদন কোরবে, তার বেশী এক ছটাকও উৎপাদন কোরবে না। যখন তাঁরা যাবেন চাষীদের কাছে তখন তারা জিজ্ঞাসা কোরবে এই আট ছটাক হিসেবেই মন্ত্রীরাও কি বেতন নেন? তাই নিতে হবে, তার বেশী এক পয়সাও যদি চাষীদের অনাহারে রেখে সেই যমজ ভাইয়ের কাঁটাল খাওয়ার মতন এই গরীব দেশের টাকা মন্ত্রীরাই ভাগাভাগি করিয়া নেন তবে আজ না হোলেও এক দিন না এক দিন তার জবাবদিহি হোতে হবে। এক গ্রামে এক জোড়া যমজ ভাই ছিলো। একটী গরীব চাষী তার গাছের একটা কাঁটাল বিক্রী করার জন্য হাটে যাওয়ার পথে সেই যমজ ভাইয়ের একজনের সঙ্গে তার দেখা হওয়ায় যমজ ভাইটী চাষীকে কাঁটালের দাম কত জিজ্ঞাসা করলো। চাষী বল্লে আমার কাঁটালের দাম দশ আনা। তখন যমজ ভাইটী বল্লে একটা কাঁটালের এত দাম? এটা যে আমি একলাই খেতে পারি। কাঁটালটা অবশ্য বেশ বড় ছিল, তাই চাষী সত্য কোরলো—যদি তুমি একলা এটা খেয়ে ফেলিতে পারো তাহোলে আমি এ কাঁটালের দাম চাই না, আমি অম্নি তোমাকে দেবো। তখন যমজ ভাই কাঁটালটার অর্দ্ধেকখানি খেয়ে চাষীকে বোল্লে ভাই তুমি এখানে একটু অপেক্ষা কর, আমি একটা দৌড় দিয়ে আসি। এই বোলে সে এক দৌড়ে নিজের বাড়ীতে গিয়ে উপস্থিত। তারপর তার অপর যমজ ভাইয়ের হাতে মুখে কাঁটালের ঝুটা আইটা মাখিয়ে দিয়ে বোল্লে—যা তুই এক দৌড়ে ঐখানে গিয়ে কাঁটালটার বাকি অর্দ্ধেক খেয়ে আয়। এই যে দেশের গরীবের টাকা ও মন্ত্রিদের কাঁটাল মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলের মল্লিক যমজ ভাইয়েরা ও চাকার উপ খাজা ভাইয়েরা ভাগাভাগি কোরে খাচ্ছেন (laughter and hear hear) তার জবাবদিহি হোতে হবে। বাংলার চাষী ছাড়বে না। এ রকম ব্যবস্থা বেশী দিন আর চোলবে না। এ মায়াকান্না আর চোলবে না। গ্রামে গ্রামে নিরন্ন চাষীর কুঁড়ে ঘরের আনাচ কানাচ তল্লাস করা হোলো আর বাদ রাখলেন কলকাতা আর হাবড়া। কেন বাংলা দেশের এই দুই প্রধান সহর বাদ পড়েছে? তার আসল কারণ হোচ্ছে তিনটী। প্রথমতঃ কলকাতা এবং হাবড়ায় এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর মুরুব্বী সাদা চামড়া সাহেবদের অনেকগুলি কল কারখানা রোয়েছে, কোটিপতি ধনিকদের ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য রোয়েছে। এখানে যদি হাত দেওয়া যায় তা হোলে হাতে বালু মেখে—মোলে দেবে। আর একটা কারণ হোলো তারা যে মন্ত্রীদের পকেট-গুলি বোঝাই কোরে দিয়েছে। তৃতীয় কারণ হোলো বাংলা দেশের গরীব লোকদের পর্ণ-কুটিরে কুটিরে যেখানে যা কিছু সামান্য সামান্য আছে গভর্ণমেণ্ট কেড়ে নেবে এই ভয়ে গোপনে গোপনে গরীব লোকেরা বিক্রী কোরবে আর কলকাতা এবং হাবড়ার দরজা তো খোলাই আছে। ইস্পাহানি কোম্পানি হুড় হুড় কোরে সেগুলি কোলকাতা আর হাবড়ায় এনে জমা কোরতে পারবে। ফলে হয়েছেও তাই। পল্লী গ্রামে যৎসামান্য ধান চাল যা ছিলো সে সব এই মজুদ বিরোধী আন্দোলন সুরু হবার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই কলকাতায় চালান হোয়েছে—পল্লীগ্রাম যে খালি সেই খালি। সেখানে গরীব চাষী আজ কচু সিদ্ধ, জামের আঁটি, কাঁটালের ছাল, আনারসের ছাল, আর গাছের পাতা এই সব খেয়ে প্রাণ বাঁচাতে পারছে না।

এখানে আমার আখাউরা ষ্টেশনের ব্যাপারটা বোলতে ইচ্ছা হয়। নোয়াখালি জেলার কেণা থেকে যে সমস্ত লোক নিরাশ্রয় হোয়ে আখাউরা ষ্টেশনে রয়েছে মাননীয় মন্ত্রী সাহাবুদ্দীন সাহেব সেখানে গেলে পর তারা সাহায্য চেয়েছিল, তিনি প্রথমতঃ মাত্র তিনটী টাকা দেন, তারপরে আর মাত্র দুটী টাকা, একুনে পাঁচটা টাকা ফেলে দিয়েই তিনি চোলে এসেছেন। সেখানকার লোক দিনের পর দিন হাহাকার কোরছে। আমার বন্ধু সৈয়দ আব্দুল মজিদ সাহেবকে জিজ্ঞাসা

করি তাঁর দেশের লোকগুলি যে অনাহারে মোরছে—(KHAN BAHADUR MAHMUD ALI তাতে আপনার কি মনে হয়?) আমার মনে হলেই চোলছে কেন? তিনি ত Parliamentary Secretary হোয়েছেন, পাঁচশো টাকা মাইনে পাচ্ছেন, কলকাতায় বাড়ী হোয়েছে, আর মনে হবার বেলায় হবে আমার? ছ আনার ভোটদাতার বাড়ী বাড়ী আবার যখন যেতে হবে একবার পরীক্ষা হবে তখন। যুদ্ধের দরুণ পরীক্ষাটা পিছিয়ে গেছে, তাই জন্যে এত বাহাদুরী। (Here, here.) তারপর খান বাহাদুর মোয়াজ্জেম উদ্দিন সাহেবের বাড়ীতে ধর্ম্মতলায় আমাদের কিশোরগঞ্জের যত লোক গিয়েছে, তাদের কাছে বোলেছেন আমরা যদি মন্ত্রী হোতে পারি ১৫ দিনের মধ্যে ১৫৲ পনর টাকা চালের দাম নামাবো। কিন্তু ফলে কি দেখছি—চালের দাম ত কমে নাই বরং বেড়ে যাচ্ছে। ওঁরাও কেবল তো উজানেই চোলেছেন? এগোতে তো পারছেন না। তাই কথা আর কাজ সবই ওঁদের উল্টা। একটী স্ত্রীলোক ছিলো, তার স্বামী তাকে যা কোরতে বলতো সে তার উল্টা কাজ করতো। স্বামী তার ব্যবহারে শেষটায় তাকে ছেড়ে দেবার মতলব কোরে তার বন্ধুর কাছে পরামর্শ জিজ্ঞাসা করায় বন্ধু বোল্লেন তুমি ওকে ছেড়ে দিচ্ছ কেন? তখন স্বামীটী বল্লে না দিয়ে আর কি করি? সে কেবলই উল্টা কাজ করে। যদি বলি পাক কর, সে তা করে না। যদি বলি আমাকে সকালে সকালে খেতে দাও, তাহোলে সে দেয় অনেক দেরীতে। এইসব শুনে বন্ধু বল্লেন তোমার স্ত্রীকে ছেড়ে দেবার দরকার নাই; তুমিও উল্টো করে কাজ কোরতে বোলো তাহোলেই সে সোজা কাজ কোরবে। যে দিন তোমার সকালে খাওয়ার দরকার তুমি সেদিন বিলম্বে খেতে দিতে বোলো, তোহোলেই সে সকালে দেবে। পাক কোরতে মানা কোরো, তাহোলেই পাক কোরবে। বন্ধুর উপদেশ মতন উল্টা কাজ করতে বলায় স্বামীটী তার স্ত্রীর কাছ থেকে সোজা কাজ পেতে লাগলো। একদিন স্ত্রীর ভাই তাকে নিয়ে যেতে এলো; বাড়ীর বাইরে থেকেই স্বামী তাকে বুঝিয়ে সুঝিয়ে ফিরিয়ে দিলেন। স্ত্রী বাড়ীর ভিতর থেকে ভাইকে আসতে এবং ফিরে যেতে দেখে স্বামীকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলো আমার ভাই ফিরে গেল কেন? স্বামী হঠাৎ সোজা কথায় বলে ফেল্লেন এসেছিল আমাদের ভাল মন্দ জিজ্ঞাসা করবার জন্য, আমি সব বোলে তাকে ফিরিয়ে দিয়েছি।

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED: আমাকে আর দু মিনিট সময় দিন। স্ত্রীটী বললো ভাই বোধ হয় আমাকে নিতে এসেছিল তুমি না করে দিয়েছ। তিনি তাঁর স্ত্রীকে বল্লেন তুমি এখন গেলে কাজকর্ম্ম চোলবে কি করে? যাহাতক এই বলা অমনি তার স্ত্রী বোলে উঠলো না না আমি এখানে থাকবো না, আমি ভাইয়ের বাড়ী চল্লাম। স্বামীও তার পিছন পিছন ছুটলেন। কিছু দূর গিয়েই সামনে পোড়লো একটা ভরানদী; অথচ স্ত্রীলোকটী সাঁতার জানতো না। নদীতে একটা গরু সাঁতারে যাচ্ছিল; সে অমনি সেই গরুটার লেজ ধোরে জলে নামলো। স্বামী পাড়ে দাঁড়িয়ে বলে উঠলেন গরুর লেজটী যেন ছেড়ো না। যাহাতক বলা অমনি স্ত্রী গরুর লেজটী দিলো ছেড়ে, এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই গেল তলিয়ে। জীবনে যে কোনো দিন স্বামীর কথা মতন কাজ করেনি সে আজ কোরবে? (Langhter.)

এদিকে স্বামী তার স্ত্রীর উল্টা কাজ করার প্রথামত স্ত্রী যে জায়গায় তলিয়ে গিয়েছে তার বিপরীত দিকে তার তল্লাস কোরতে লাগলেন। সাধারণতঃ মানুষ ভেসে যায় ভাটিতে, কিন্তু সেই স্বামীটী তার স্ত্রীর তল্লাস কোরতে লাগলেন উজানে। লোকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলে স্বামী উত্তর দিল যে জীবনে কোন দিন ভাটিতে যায় নাই আজ যাবে বিশ্বাস হয় না। খানিক পরে যখন স্ত্রীর মৃতদেহ ভাটির একটা ঘাটের পারে ভেসে উঠলো তখন তিনি সেই দেহটাকে টেনে-হিচড়ে ডাঙ্গায় তুলে তার কাণের কাছে বোলে উঠলেন "জ্যান্ত থাকতে কোন দিন ভাইটাস নাই, মইরা আবার ভাইটালি ক্যান্?"

আমাদের মন্ত্রীরাও তাই। ভাইয়েরা এখানে থাকতে যা কিছু বোলেছেন কাজের বেলায় কোরেছেন তার উল্টা। তাই কেবল উজায়াই যাচ্ছেন। কিন্তু ভাইচাবেন্ একদিন কিন্তু তখন তাঁরা জ্যান্ত থাকবেন কিনা জানি না।

Maulvi ABUL HASHIM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish I could convince my honourable friend Mr. Bokainagri that the people of Bengal are not just so foolish as he likes them to be; condemning this Ministry for their alleged failure to solve the food problem, he thinks he is giving proof of his sympathy for the starving masses. We know how much weight is to be put on the words of those who, when in power, did nothing.

Sir, I congratulate the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy if not for anything else at least for his ability to correctly appreciate the situation. He has very recently in one of his statements said:—"I shall organise Bengal on famine basis". I congratulate him for this statement.

Sir, this province is really passing through a first class crisis. We are here talking of starvation, pestilence and death. What pains me is that even when we are passing through this great crisis we have not been able to come to our proper senses. A Parliament, constituted on the model of that political system known as western democracy, is supposed to be a machinery through which the will of the nation speaks, but in reality it is a machinery through which the will of the majority and more correctly the will of the coterie that dominates the majority speaks. I do not know what actually happens in the Mother of Parliaments, but, Sir, in this daughter of the mother I have never, in the course of my seven years' experience, seen any matter being discussed on its merits. Everything proceeds according to prearranged party plans. I think that this should be made an occasion at least for God's sake when things may be discussed on their merits in view of the pestilence and disease, in view of the unthinkable sufferings of those whom we are supposed to represent. I do not think that any man, circumstanced as we are, can solve the food problem alone unless he be aided by God. We are all Muslims. The Hon'ble Leader of the House, the Chief Minister is a Muslim; the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies is a Muslim and fortunately the honourable leader of the Opposition is also a Muslim. We Muslims believe in God. Let us, therefore, take it that Providence in His wisdom has placed Mr. Suhrawardy in charge of the Supply Department. We have at least this satisfaction that we have placed the best amongst us in charge of this department. He has done all that a human being in the circumstances could possibly do. Failure and success are in the hands of Providence. We are not responsible for failure or success. Our responsibility lies in our doing our duty well and we are satisfied that the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has done his job well, and I hope that in all fairness everyone concerned will have to admit that.

Sir, if any piece of legislation or if any style of oration could solve this problem, then we could have all sat together and passed that piece of legislation or delivered speeches in that style. Legislation or oration cannot

save the people. The only thing that can save them is an united action. Instead of indulging in party politics let us all combine together in a religious spirit and try to solve this problem.

Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy, like all other human beings, is not infallible. He has made mistakes and he may in future also make mistakes. Instead of showering curses and abuses on him for his mistakes, let us in his moments of disappointments fill him with energy and courage. I would appeal to the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition and through him to his party to consider whether it is time for us to take any political advantage out of this grave situation, out of this starvation and out of the sufferings of millions of our country men.

(At this stage the red light was lit, but the member was given two minutes' time to finish his speech.)

Sir, we may have causes for fighting one another or making peace with one another. But in order that we can fight or we can make peace with one another it is necessary that we must live. I would most seriously request all to defer their petty squabbles for the present and to deposit all the causes of their political quarrels in their political reserve bank. Let us survive first and then let us see whether we shall have to fight or to make peace.

Mrs. NELLIE SEN GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to say a few words about this question. We have heard so much about the condition of Bengal, but I still feel that Chittagong is in a much worse condition than many places and I shall give you some of the reasons for my feeling in that direction.

As you know, we used to have a lot of rice, a great deal of rice, from Burma. In fact, many Chittagonians used to live almost entirely on Rangoon rice. That rice has not been forthcoming now for many months.

Another thing is that last year's crop was a very disappointing one, much less than we had hoped for. Another reason is that two lakhs of evacuees had come from Burma. They came to the Chittagong district last year. They came with practically nothing, without money and certainly without food, and they had to be given food.

Then, there is the military and last but not least the mules of the military. I know that the military has to be fed. I know that the mules have to be fed. I for one would be loath to see even a dumb animal go unfed. But you cannot go on feeding the military at the expense of the civil population for all time and that is what is happening in Chittagong. People starving in Chittagong were asked to grow more rice, not for themselves but for the military. I do realise that the military must be fed and that the mules which carry their kit must be fed. But I do feel that the District Magistrate of Chittagong is there to look after the civil population and not the military. There are plenty of people to look after the military.

Then again, there are so many families in Chittagong with almost no earning members. Many of the menfolk are political prisoners. Many of them are detenus and last year several hundreds of people were killed. It means again there are so many families with no earning member.

Then again, I have to grumble about what I feel is the unfair way in which food distribution is arranged. Government servants, as Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta has said, can get rice at 2½ seers per rupee and sugar at 8 annas a seer. Ration card is given to those people who earn up to Rs. 25 a month. You can just imagine the state of those people who earn a rupee a day? What can a labourer who earns a rupee a day do? Sometimes people earning Rs. 500 takes advantage of the ration card. A daily labourer who earns a rupee a day has to pay 10 annas per seer of rice. What is that to feed a family? I do say that the arrangement that has been made for the distribution of food is extremely unfair.

Then again, there are the fishermen of Chittagong and they are in a terrible crisis. As you know, boats have been removed and consequently no boat can go into the Bay of Bengal which means that the livelihood of fishermen has gone. There is plenty of scope for fishery in Chittagong rivers and tanks, but that does not give much work to the fishermen. These fishermen have been fishermen for many generations and even their womenfolk are used to helping them rather than doing other work. Government have distributed some spinning wheels and some seers of cotton. A man who has not been used to that kind of work cannot at once get much out of it and it means that the amount he earns is very, very small, certainly not enough to live on.

Then again, I would draw your attention to the roving beggars. They used to be fed by people but now every grain of food counts and they cannot get anything. No one can give any grain of food to these beggars. People are boiling the leaves of mango trees and eating them and they are also eating red potatoes which are undoubtedly very substantial but not good for stomach. Cholera and malaria are taking a heavy toll of these people. There is no medicine for cholera and there is no medicine for malaria. Recently six or seven fishermen died in a very small area in a very small tank and nowadays when we talk of people dying of starvation I wonder whether we realise seriously what it means. I have always realised it and I have admitted it.

There is another matter on which I would like to say a word. I know for a fact—I am not speaking from mere hearsay—that a man who wanted to send *atta* to Chittagong applied for permission. At first he could not get it. Next time he went with a very nice present and he was successful in getting the permission. A day or two later, the embargo was removed and the man felt that his present had been wasted. He went to the officer and said "let us make it half and half". In the end he managed to get back more than three-quarters of the present. One thing I must say that the man who gave that present is not going to be the loser. It is the poor man who is going to buy that *atta* who is going to pay?

There is much that I want to say but I have no time. I feel that you must send rice to Chittagong and you must see that it is properly distributed.

(At this stage, the House was adjourned for 15 minutes for prayer.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the short time available to me I propose to focus on the centre spot in the picture. You know that the last Government were manoeuvred out of office and the present Government installed in their place on the food question. I am therefore entitled to ask the question as to what have been the achievements of the present Government in the solution of the food question. The present Government have been in office for more than three months. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Not three months.) I stand corrected, about three months, and what have they achieved so far? Sir, this question may be answered in one short sentence: While formerly there was starvation, today there is death. I use no language of exaggeration when I say that today there is death: apart from cases of actual death from starvation reported from various parts of the country the diseases that are reported today to take a heavy toll of human lives are really diseases of no food. How can people have food when there is no food? How can poor people have food when the price has shot up to as much as cent per cent. since this Government accepted office. So people are starving and dying. This is the first quarterly balance-sheet of the Nazimuddin administration in the matter of food. Let us see how this balance-sheet came to be prepared. As I have already said, the last Government were manoeuvred out of office and the present one installed in their place on the food question. Sir, it is no use recalling how His Excellency Sir John Herbert by application of questionable methods installed his prize-boy, Sir Nazimuddin, in office. Suffice it to say for our present purpose that the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin anyhow got installed in office and immediately on acceptance of office he thought and naturally thought that Bengal might forget the grievous wrong that she had suffered in the hands of a reactionary and partisan Governor through Sir Nazim's instrumentality if he and his Government could solve the food problem to some extent. Sir Nazimuddin applied himself to the solution of the food problem and in this gigantic task on whom could he depend but the little wizard of the Muslim League, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy. Mr. Suhrawardy is young, energetic, and clever——(MR. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: He is not young!) Youth is more a psychological phenomenon than physiological Let me say, he is young psychologically; and I should say he is generally well-informed and well-read; but he is erratic and above all he is a magician and like all magicians he believes a little too much in trickeries. He has applied trickeries to the solution of the problem and has brought the province to grief. Immediately on acceptance of office the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy undertook to repudiate the obvious. He began to preach his pet no-shortage theory. The Minister-magician by the sleight of hands, as it were, tried to convert the

obvious shortage into sufficiency. What did it matter to Mr. Suhrawardy that the supply-demand position of food-grains in the province had greatly deteriorated? What did it matter to Mr. Suhrawardy that supplies from Burma had been lost to the province? What did it matter to Mr. Suhrawardy that there had been failure of crops over a wide area owing to cyclones, floods and other natural causes? What did it matter to Mr. Suhrawardy that the demand of foodstuffs had greatly extended owing firstly to the influx of a large number of people in the industrial areas of Calcutta and Howrah, secondly, to the influx of a large number of evacuees from Burma and Malay, and lastly, owing to the stationing of a big army on the eastern frontier of the province? The man in the street knows all these patent facts but Mr Suhrawardy pretends that he did not. He listened to his Masters' voices: was it not Mr L S Amery who speaking on the general food situation in India said that it was not a question of shortage but a question of maladjustment? (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: He spoke after I did.) In that case he helped Mr. Amery to make that preposterous statement Again was it not Major Wood who speaking on the Bengal food situation before Mr Suhrawardy said that in Bengal it was not a question of physical shortage but a question of hoarding. On this imaginary hoarding, Mr Suhrawardy set his heart. He imagined he could solve Bengal's food problem by dehoarding this imaginary hoarded stock He did not look for these hoards in places where they might exist, viz., in the godowns of Calcutta and Howrah, specially in the big godowns of the *Bara Sahibs* of Clive Street, but he proposed to find them, magician as he is, in places where they could not and did not exist, viz., in the poor men's hovels in mufassil He initiated his memorable anti-hoarding drive with great ceremony and trumpeting. From what he proclaimed about the food drive, one might have thought that he would flood the whole province with the dehoarded stock, but at long last—only yesterday—like a meek lamb he bleated out in reply to insistent queries, yes, deficit has been reported from every area All right, it is never too late. Have the courage now to say that Bengal is a deficit province; have the courage to declare Bengal a famine area; have the courage to say that not an ounce of foodstuff shall go out from Bengal to any country whatsoever and have the courage to tell His Majesty's Government that Bengal has got to be fed if the war in the East is to be won and approach His Majesty's Government for supply of foodstuffs from overseas? I know that he will not have that courage. I know that even if he makes that demand he cannot make it irresistible It was merely to make this demand irresistible that we on this side of the House made an offer to them for an all-parties Ministry, but they turned down that proposal under the protecting wings of a partisan Governor and they will go down to history as a number of people who have betrayed a great cause and who have thrived and prospered on the ruination and death of their countrymen It is for them to answer what they will do, how they will solve the problem.

Mr. I. C. KENNEDY: Mr Speaker, Sir, we in this party are opposed to the special motions moved by the Opposition in so far as they censure Government for failure to tackle the food problem. As regards remedies,

for a very serious situation, there are many points in the special motions on which all parties could agree. We consider, however, that Government in the short time they have been in office have endeavoured to tackle the food problem with energy and determination, and that they are not to blame for the deterioration which has occurred. The present is not the time for censure and recriminations. Mistakes—serious mistakes—have been made in the past, but it is futile now to rake these up for use as political bludgeons. The situation in this province is critical and, if it is not to become more so, all the skill, knowledge and resourcefulness of all parties must be thrown into a common pool.

I think honourable members will agree that Bengal's food problem cannot be separated from the food problem of India as a whole and doubtless they welcome, as we do, the directives issued recently by the Central Government following the Delhi conference.

Now, Sir, the Central Government in its statement of food policy rightly lay stress on the rigorous enforcement of the Food Grains Control Order. This order, we understand, is in force in Bengal, and gives the Local Government great powers to control the trade and movement of food-grains. It will be interesting to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Civil Supply Department how far this order is being enforced. Government should in our view exercise strict control over all rice mills in the province as we feel that it is through these mills that the movement of rice can best be controlled. Rice mills are, for the most part, highly concentrated in certain areas, and have clearly defined normal sources of supply. A large part of the rice crop passes through the mills on its way from the producers to the consumers, and it seems to us obvious it is here that the main flow of rice to the general public can best be directed and controlled. I suggest that Government should establish a special staff for their inspection and supervision

Much criticism, Sir, has been levelled against the recent anti-hoarding drive of the Bengal Government. Some is pertinent, for we in this party believe that it was a mistake to exclude Howrah and Calcutta from its scope. We think that this drive will have served a most useful purpose if it has resulted in filling, however, inadequately, the gap which exists in our food statistics. Its main value, however, has been to effect some measure of redistribution in the rural areas In this matter Bengal has given an important lead which the Government of India is urging other provinces to follow.

Sir, before Government can tackle the problem of food distribution, they must concentrate first on the elimination of hoarding and profiteering, and deal mercilessly with black marketeers. I think that no matter how severe are the penalties meted out to those gentry, they will have the whole-hearted approval of the people of this province. No longer can action be restricted to issuing vague threats and prosecuting petty traders. It is the big hoarders, those who hope to profit on a large scale, who must be brought to book. Again I think it is no exaggeration to say that the

people of Bengal will aid Government to smell out these pests once they are convinced that Government are determined to stamp them out by all means in their power.

Reference has often been made to the stocks of rice and other foodstuffs held by industrial employers for the benefit of their workers. Such employers have frequently been blamed for increasing the food difficulties of the province by buying at high prices in the open market. In the absence of Government assistance in the matter of supplies they have been forced to do so. The system is not a good one, and has inherent in it the danger of competitive buying, particularly in a market free of all price control.

It may interest honourable members to know that the aggregate stocks of rice held by participants in the Bengal Chamber food scheme on the 30th of June amounted to a supply sufficient only to meet four and half weeks' requirements of the total labour forces catered for by the scheme, on a rigidly rationed basis of 2½ seers per week for jute mill and miscellaneous factory labour, and 3½ seers per week for engineering and public utility labour. The prices at which rice and other food commodities are made available to industrial workers are those fixed by the Government of Bengal on the 18th September, 1942. Industrial workers are thus obtaining rice at approximately three annas a seer against a cost to the employers of thirteen annas per seer.

Sir, Government has been blamed for its failure to secure supplies of rice from neighbouring provinces, and it must be pointed out in all fairness that the failure was due in the first place to the refusal of the surplus provinces to fulfil the basic plan of the Government of India, and in the second place to the steps which they took to prevent free trade.

The important question of prices had much to do with the failure of free trade as the danger of a high price level in Bengal, attracting more than surpluses from Bengal's neighbours, was great. As it is—prices of rice in the neighbouring surplus provinces have shown a marked sympathetic rise—completely unjustified by the extent of trade which passed. I would warn the Hon'ble Minister that internal food prices must be drastically lowered, and held at a much lower level, before adequate supplies will be willingly forthcoming from other more happily situated provinces.

The people of Bengal, Sir, have suffered greatly from lack of preparation to meet a food situation which many months ago threatened to develop into the crisis of today. This must not happen again—and Government in spite of pre-occupation with the present food difficulties—must look and plan ahead. Are plans being devised to control and distribute the next rice crop, and the one after that? If so, I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to give the House details of such proposals.

More food must be grown in Bengal and, while we feel that the present Government are tackling this problem seriously, much still remains to be done. There is the question of irrigation which is fundamental to the

increased production of food crops in the province. Sir William Stampe has, we understand, recommended certain steps in this connection, and we should like to know what action is being taken on them. Doubtless, certain equipment will be required which, under present conditions, may not be easy to obtain. We, Sir, feel that this difficulty can be overcome if the Government of Bengal press their claim in the proper quarter with sufficient determination.

Mr. HEM CHANDRA NASKER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I commence my review of the statement on food situation in Bengal made by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies, I would congratulate the Minister in charge on his bringing out such a nice piece of literature that contains pregnant statement on food situation. As a nice piece of literature it not only contains the beauty of expression, vocabulary, style and dictum and masterly handling the subject of discussion, but claims right appreciation of the climax of his expectation and anti-climax marked and admitted by him in his pathetic note of stern reality and present state of things. Sir, in the monograph published by the Hon'ble Minister I find so many "will's" to mark his future expectations and big hopes, and so many verbs in the present and past tenses to explain the various grounds of his self-eulogy on the recent food drive as well as the outbursts of sentiments on the existing state of affairs, while thousands of the unfortunates of this province are standing on the verge of death and destruction for sheer want of their daily morsels. It is a nice thing indeed to make an honest attempt to remove from the mind of the dying multitude the panic of death of sheer starvation. It is a pious job indeed to devote all our energy to the reformation of devils and purge their hearts off their greed of speculative gains, while their victims are already breathing their last.

Sir, it is a question of life and death. The seriousness of the problem can hardly be exaggerated. It requires immediate solution. But what I find in the statement of the Hon'ble Minister in charge, falls far short of what everyone expected. It is over two months that the present Ministry has been in office, but do we find yet any appreciable fall in the price of rice and other essential commodities in this province? Do not we still find the starving and naked millions throughout the length and breadth of Bengal? Do we yet hear of importations of the necessary quantities of rice from other provinces, which have surplus to spare for us? What sure step has as yet been taken to stop further exportations of rice and other foodstuff from this province? What amount of loans has been granted to the poor cultivators of Bengal to ensure future crops? Did the cultivators receive their expected seedlings this season? How many pairs of cloths have as yet been sold at controlled price to the naked millions of Bengal?

Where are the answers to these questions, Sir, in the statement of the Hon'ble Minister in charge? As yet I do not find the actual figure of stocks that have been seized in the recent drive. There's a whisper in the air that there was no appreciable stock throughout this province to be seized, as in the recent drive the officers appointed in it failed to discover any such in spite of their sincere and honest attempts. Unless and until

the actual figure is disclosed the truth of what is heard is sure to stand admitted. The Hon'ble Minister seems to be so very jubilant over the success of the equitable distribution of the seized stuff in the last drive; but may I know why the cry of starvation is still heard throughout this province? Why the influx of starving villagers still crowd the streets of this city of Calcutta?

There is no denial of the fact that of all the other provinces in India the position of Bengal has become worst. The supply-demand position of hers has deteriorated most miserably. The demand of rice has, in this province, greatly expanded as a result of a large influx of workers into the Calcutta industrial areas and other military works and of evacuees from Burma and Malay as well as the stationing of a big army on our eastern frontier. To make matter worse the haphazard policy of the Government, always failing in effectively co-ordinating and controlling the different departmental functions, has brought about the lack of confidence of the general public and businessmen in the ability of the Government.

Sir, I do not find any reason why the present Ministry should not declare Bengal as the famine area, while the naked and starving millions of this province are already praying for death, which they now consider to be the only solace of their lives. I think it to be the solemn duty of the Government now to declare Bengal as the famine area and take over the responsibility of feeding the hungry people of this province and clothing them.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before you ask another member to speak I rise on a point of personal explanation. I was not present here when Mr. Abdul Wahab Khan spoke. He said that I was responsible for driving out paddy from Bengal. Sir, that is a malicious lie and I treat it with the contempt it deserves.

Mr. SPEAKER: Do not use the expression "lie". Mr. Biswas, will you please resume your seat? That is not a personal explanation.

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়, একই বছরে আমরা দুবার এই অতি প্রয়োজনীয় খাদ্য-সমস্যা নিয়ে বাংলাদেশের এই পরিষদ কক্ষে আলোচনা আরম্ভ করেছি। এবং এই আলোচনা আজকে যে স্তরে এসে পৌঁছেছে তাতে, আমার বিশ্বাস, বহু লোকই এই বিতর্কের দ্বারা তৃপ্তি পান নি। তার প্রধান কারণ, সাধারণতঃ সমস্ত বিতর্কই বিরোধী দলের বক্তাদের বক্তৃতায় রসঘন ও সমৃদ্ধ হ'য়ে ওঠে। পরিষদের সভ্যদের মধ্যে যাঁরা আজ বিরোধী দলে আছেন, তাঁদের মধ্যে একমাত্র সরকারী কংগ্রেস বাদে অন্যান্য সকলেই মুখ্যতঃ আজকের এই সমস্যার জন্য দায়ী। কাজেই প্রাণ খুলে এই বিতর্কে তাঁরা যোগদান কোরতে পারছেন না। (A MEMBER: আপনার প্রাণ তো খুলে গেছে?) যদি সত্য সত্য এই খাদ্য-সমস্যার মূলতত্ত্ব আবিষ্কার করবার জন্য আলোচনা সুরু হয় তাহোলে তাঁরা নিজেরাই নিজেদের ফাঁদে ধরা পোড়ে যাবেন। একটা জাতির ভাগ্য নিয়ে জনকয়েক লোক কি নিষ্ঠুরভাবে জুয়া খেলতে পারেন, আজকের খাদ্য-সমস্যা তার নিখুঁৎ ও জীবন্ত চিত্র। এবং এই চিত্র আঁকবার দায়িত্ব নিয়েছিলেন ভূতপূর্ব মন্ত্রিসভা। (Mr. ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: আপনার মতন লোক তো আর সবাই নয়।)

সরকারী কংগ্রেস গতবার খাদ্য-সমস্যা সম্পর্কে একটী প্রস্তাব উত্থাপন কোরেছিলেন এবং এবারেও খাদ্য-সমস্যা নিয়ে তাঁরা প্রস্তাব এনেছেন, এর পেছনে যে মনোভাব এবং দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর পরিচয় পাই, সরকারী কংগ্রেস বাদে আর যে দু'টী দল আছে তাদের দ্বারা উপস্থাপিত প্রস্তাবের ভিতর সে দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী বা মনোভাব পরিলক্ষিত হয় না। বাংলাদেশের মতো একটী বৃহৎ প্রদেশের একটী অতি প্রয়োজনীয় বিভাগের ভার ঢাকার নবাবের ন্যায় একজন অসাধারণ সাধু এবং কর্ম্মতৎপর ব্যক্তির উপর যেদিন ন্যস্ত হয়েছিলো, আজকের এই পরিণতিকে কল্পনা করা সেদিন অসম্ভব তো ছিলোই না বরং এই অপরিহার্য্য পরিণামের জন্য সেই দিন থেকে প্রত্যেকটী সভ্যকে প্রস্তুত হোয়ে থাকতে হোয়েছিলো। কিন্তু তা জেনেও এই গুরুভার এমন একজন কৃতি ব্যক্তির ওপর যে ন্যস্ত করা হোয়েছিলো তার পেছনে কি কোনো মনোভাব ছিলো না? ছিলো। এবং সেই মনোভাবটী কি আজ তা বিশ্লেষণ করা প্রয়োজনীয় হোয়ে পোড়েছে। গত অর্দ্ধ শতাব্দী ধরে বাংলার মুসলমান সমাজে যে রাজনৈতিক মনোভাব ধীরে ধীরে গোড়ে উঠেচে,—তা প্রধানতঃ ঢাকার নবাব পরিবারকে কেন্দ্র কোরে; মুসলিম বাংলার এই রাজনৈতিক চেতনা বাংলাদেশের রাজনৈতিক গতি ও পরিণতির ওপর আজ যে প্রভাব বিস্তার করতে আরম্ভ ক'রেছে, তার পরিমাণ আজ আর অকিঞ্চিৎকর নয়। তাই, ইচ্ছা থাকলেও কি হিন্দু কি মুসলমান, কোন দলই বাংলার রাজনীতি ক্ষেত্রে এই পরিবারের রাজনৈতিক প্রভাব অগ্রাহ্য করতে চান না—হয় তো পারেনও না। এবং ঠিক এই কারণেই সেদিন এই পরিবারের একজনকে দেখেছিলাম ভূতপূর্ব্ব মন্ত্রিসভার অন্যতম কর্ণধাররূপে, আর একজনকে দেখেছিলাম বিরোধীদলের নেতারূপে; আজকে গতির চাকা উল্টে পরিণতিকে রূপান্তরিত করেছে সত্য কিন্তু হিসেবে ভুল হয় নি। অর্থাৎ সেই পরিবারের একজন হয়েছেন প্রধান মন্ত্রী—আর একজন বিরোধী দলের পাণ্ডা। ভূতপূর্ব্ব প্রধান মন্ত্রী মৌলবী ফজলুল হক সাহেব কোন দিনই এই পরিবারের কারো না কারো সাহায্য ছাড়া দাঁড়াতে পারেন নি। গতবার সার নাজিমুদ্দীনের বিরুদ্ধে তাঁর ভাগ্য তাঁকে পরিচালিত করেছিল—সার নাজিমুদ্দীনের জ্ঞাতি ভ্রাতার সাহায্য তাই সেদিন তাঁর পক্ষে অপরিহার্য্য হয়েছিল এবং শুধু সেইজন্যই শত ত্রুটি-বিচ্যুতি আর অযোগ্যতা সত্ত্বেও ঢাকার নবাব পরিবারের একজনের ওপর এই দায়িত্বপূর্ণ বিভাগের কর্ত্তৃত্ব চাপিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছিল। (Clapping from the Government Benches.) এবং সেইজন্যই তাঁদের কর্ম্মপন্থায় একটী বিচ্যুতি ঘটেছে। সেটী আমরা জানতাম, এবং যাঁরা বাংলার সামান্য রাজনীতির সঙ্গে পরিচিত তারাও জানতেন। তাঁদের ভিতর কি চিন্তাশীল লোক ছিলেন না? (A member from the opposition bench: কেন, নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তীই তো ছিলেন।) এবং যথেষ্টই ছিলেন। কিন্তু উপায় ছিলো না। কারণ মুসলিম বাংলাকে দ্বিধা বিভক্ত কোরে বিগত গভর্ণমেণ্টকে নিজের অস্তিত্ব বজায় রাখতে হোয়েছিল, এবং সেই মনোভাব নিয়েই অযোগ্যতা এবং ত্রুটি সত্ত্বেও ঢাকার নবাবের হাতে বাংলাদেশের জীবনীকে সঁপে দেওয়া হোয়েছিলো। (A member from the opposition bench: তুমি মূর্খ।) ওটা গাল—যুক্তি নয়। বিরোধীদলের গালাগাল ছাড়া আজ আর কোন মূলধন অবশিষ্ট নেই; জুয়াখেলায় তাঁরা সর্ব্বস্বান্ত দেউলে। যাক্, যে কথা বলছিলাম: ঢাকার নবাবকে রাজপাটে বসিয়ে যে অযোগ্যতা প্রকাশ পেয়েছে, নিজেদের যে বিকৃতরূপ দেশের বুকে ফুটে উঠেছে যে অপরিণামদর্শীতা প্রকট হোয়েছে, তারই শেষ পরিণতি আজকের এই দুঃখ ও অসহায়রূপ। তখন একমাত্র চিন্তা ছিল—অস্তিত্ব বাঁচানো,—আত্মরক্ষা (RAI HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Sit down. Sit down, we won't hear.)

Mr. RASIKLAL BISWAS: কেন আপনাদের গায়ে খুব লাগছে বুঝি। (Noise and interruptions):

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: আমি জানি আমার এসব কথা কতখানি তিক্ত লাগবে—এতে কারো কারো যে বিরক্ত হবার যথেষ্ট কারণ আছে, তাও আমি বুঝি, এবং আরো বুঝি ও জানি যে একথা খুলে আজ বলতে গেলে আমাকে যুক্তির পরিবর্তে কদর্য্য ও ভদ্র সমাজে অব্যবহৃত বহু কথাও শুনতে হবে।

Mr. SPEAKER: আপনি এ সব কথা বোলছেন কেন, আসল point যা তাই বলুন।

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY: সভাপতি মহাশয়, বন্ধুবর শ্রীযুক্ত অতুল সেন মহাশয় পুরাণো দলিলের নজির উল্লেখ কোরে স্যার নাজিমুদ্দিন পরিচালিত বিরোধী-দলের যে চিত্র আমাদের সম্মুখে উদ্ঘাটিত কোরেছেন তার প্রত্যুত্তরে আমি তাদেরি পদাঙ্ক অনুসরণ ক'রে দু'চারটি কথা শুধু উদ্ধৃত করবো এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে এ অভয়ও দেবো যে কোন সাধারণ ব্যক্তির বাণী আমি আমার স্বপক্ষে উদ্ধৃত করবো না:

"They are dying; they are bleeding; they are suffering; they are collapsing; they are starving. I would like to have a straight answer this evening from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this department whether he has allowed the Civil Directorate Department not to direct the energies in the proper direction Their control has not controlled the vagaries of the department; control has not controlled the shady, filthy transaction behind the scene; control has not controlled everything."

(A voice: Who has said so?)

বাই ধৈর্য্য ধর:

এটা কার বক্তৃতা শুনবেন? বিগত মন্ত্রী দলের Coalition partyর সেক্রেটারী সৈয়দ বদরুদ্দোজা সাহেবের। বিগত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল সম্বন্ধে এই বক্তৃতা প্রদত্ত হোয়েছিল এবং তাদেরি দলের সেক্রেটারীর মুখ থেকে বর্তমান বাংলার চিত্ররূপ পরিস্ফুট হোয়েছে!! বাংলার এ চিত্র অঙ্কিত করেছেন কে? কে বাংলাকে নিরন্ন করেছে—কার দোষে বাঙ্গালী আজ উপবাসী? কে করেছে বাঙলাকে বিশ্ব সর্ব্বহারা? কারা বাংলার শ্যামল বুকে চিতার আগুন জ্বেলে দিয়েছে—লেলিয়ে দিয়েছে বাংলার বুকের ওপর মৃত্যুর বিভীষিকা? কারো দোষ দিয়ে কোন লাভ নাই; শুধু দোষ দেখিয়ে এ অবস্থার প্রতিকার হবে না। আমি সেদিন বোলেছিলাম—"চাল নিয়ে চাল দিতে যাবেন না"। আজকে এমন একটা রূঢ় বাস্তবের সম্মুখীন আমরা হোয়েছি যার ভিতরে দলাদলির কোন স্থান নেই। (A voice: তবে আপনি দল ছাড়লেন কেন?) আজ মুসলমানের পেটের আগুন আর হিন্দুর পেটের আগুনের মধ্যে কোনো পার্থক্য নেই। কংগ্রেস, হিন্দু মহাসভা, মুসলীম লীগ—প্রত্যেকের দাবী একই স্থানে এসে মিলেছে। আমি বিশ্বাস করি, প্রত্যেকটী প্রতিষ্ঠানের এক একটা বিশিষ্ট অবদান আছে, এবং দেশসেবার দিক দিয়ে প্রয়োজনীয়তা আছে—একথা অস্বীকার কোরলে ভুল হবে। অসত্যের উপর, অনৈক্যের উপর কোনদিন কিছু দাঁড়াতে পারে না। কাজেই প্রত্যেককে, একথা স্মরণ রাখতে হবে যে, এই সমস্যার যদি সমাধান আমরা না কোরতে পারি, আমরা আমাদের দেশের সামনে দাঁড়াতে পারবো না। সেইজন্য একে নিয়ে আসতে হবে—একটা সম্মিলিত জাতীয় প্রচেষ্টার মধ্যে এবং জাতীয় স্বার্থ, জাতীয় জীবন-মরণের মাপকাঠিতে যদি এই সমস্যার আলোচনা করা যায় তাহোলেই

এ সমস্যার প্রতিকার করা সম্ভব হবে। ভগবান মানুষ বা জাতির ভাগ্যে দুঃখ ও দুর্দ্দশার আঘাত সংঘাত চাপিয়ে দেন শুধু তাকে পিষে মারবার জন্যে নয়; দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশার ভিতর থেকেই এক একটা মানুষ বা জাতি খুঁজে পায় তার হারিয়ে ফেলা চেতনার সূত্র—উঠে দাঁড়ায় তার প্রাণ ধর্ম্ম সম্বল ক'রে। আমি বিশ্বাস করি এম্নি কোরে দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশার মধ্য দিয়ে এক হোয়ে এক একটা বৃহৎ সমস্যা, জাতীয় জীবনের প্রধান সমস্যার সমাধান অতীতের কত জাতি খুঁজে পেয়েছে—আমরাও পাবো। এবং সেইটাই হবে আমাদের জাতির প্রতি অগাধ ভালোবাসা ও অকপট প্রেমের পরিচয়। আজকের মতো সর্ব্বনেশে সঙ্কট-সঙ্কুল জাতীয় জীবনে আমরা ক্ষুদ্র স্বার্থ বিসর্জ্জন দিয়ে এক হতে পেরেছি কি না, এই প্রশ্নই থাকবে ইতিহাসের পৃষ্ঠায় ক্ষোদিত হ'য়ে। সমস্ত জিনিষটাকে একটা বৈজ্ঞানিক ভিত্তির উপর দাঁড় করিয়ে আজকে আমাদের বিচার কর্ত্তে হবে, সঙ্কটের সম্মুখীন হতে হবে—এই সমস্যাকে আলোচনা কর্ত্তে হবে। পরস্পরকে আক্রমণ ও প্রতিআক্রমণ ক'রে আমাদের কর্ত্তব্য শেষ করলে চলবে না। বিগত গভর্ণমেণ্টকে যখন তখনকার বিরোধীদল আক্রমণাত্মক সমালোচনা করেছিলেন, তখনও যে ভুল করা হোয়েছিল, আজও হোচ্ছে ঠিক তারি পুনরাবৃত্তি। আজকের এই খাদ্য-সমস্যার সঙ্গে রয়েছে সমগ্র Imperial Policy, সাম্রাজ্যবাদী নীতির অঙ্গাঙ্গী সম্বন্ধ। British Imperialismএর মনোভাব বিশ্লেষণ করলে এর স্বরূপ বোঝা যাবে। বর্ত্তমান অবস্থাটা কি কোরে সম্ভবপর হ'লো? British Imperialism আজ আমাদের লক্ষ্য ক'রে প্রশ্ন করছে—"তোমরা আমাদের সঙ্গে আছো কি না। (A member from the Congress Bench : And you have become an agent of the British Imperialism.) যদি না থাকো তাহোলে তোমরা বিদ্রোহী। (Noise and interruption.) "তোমরা যদি আমাদের সঙ্গে না থাকো তাহোলে তোমরা বিদ্রোহী,—কিছু খাও কি না খাও, বাঁচো কি মোরে যাও তোমরা,—তাতে কিছু এসে যায় না। বিদ্রোহ কর, কি করে সে-বিদ্রোহ দমন কর্ত্তে হয়, তা আমরা জানি। আর আমাদের সঙ্গে যদি থাকো তাহোলে Look at England ইংলণ্ডের দিকে চেয়ে দেখ। ইংলণ্ডের জনসাধারণ যে দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশার ভিতর দিয়ে যাচ্ছে তাই তোমাদের যেতে হবে,—তাদের সমান দুঃখ তোমাদের ভোগ করতে হবে। ক্যানাডাকে দেখ, আফ্রিকাকে দেখ, অষ্ট্রেলিয়াকে দেখ। এদের প্রত্যেকে যে দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশা ভোগ করছে, সেই দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশা, সেই কষ্ট, তোমাকেও সহ্য করতে হবে।" আমরা খাই-কি-না খাই সেজন্য তারা আমাদের দিকে তাকাবে না। তাঁরা মনে করতে পারছেন না যে এ দেশ তাদের,—মনে তা করতে পারেও না। এ দেশের লোককে তারা রক্ষা করবে না। আমরা পরাধীন, ভিন্ন জাতির অধীনে বাস করছি, তাদের কাছ থেকে কোন সহায়তা, সহানুভূতি পাবো না—একথা সবাই আমরা সন্দেহাতীতরূপে জানি। ভূতপূর্ব্ব মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এই একান্ত সহজ জানা কথাটা সাহস ক'রে, জোর ক'রে বোল্‌তে পারেন নি। একথা বলতে পারেন নি যে যতক্ষণ এদেশে শাসকরূপে তোমরা থাকবে, এ দেশের মানুষ বাঁচাবার দায়িত্ব তোমাদের, আমাদের নয়। এ কথা বলতে পারেন নি যে তোমাদের সাম্রাজ্য রক্ষার চাহিদায় এ যুদ্ধে তোমরা নেমেছ—তোমাদের যুদ্ধের ফলে আজ আমাদের এই শোচনীয় মৃত্যু-দশা। ক্ষুধার জ্বালায় তিলে তিলে একটা গোটা জাতকে মারবার মহাপাপ তোমাদের,—আমাদের নয়। সমস্ত বাংলাদেশ আজ আইনতঃ না হলেও কার্য্যতঃ সামরিক শাসনের অধীন; সমস্ত প্রয়োজনীয়তা ছাপিয়ে উঠেছে আজ সামরিক প্রয়োজনীয়তা। সামরিক প্রয়োজনীয়তা মিটিয়ে অন্য প্রয়োজনীয়তার কথা পরে হবে, আজকের নিশ্চিত বিধান ইহাই। যে প্রয়োজনে

এবং যে হেতু বাংলাদেশকে সামরিক শাসনের অধীন ক'রে রাখা হয়েছে, সেই প্রয়োজনে এবং সেই হেতুই বাংলার জনসাধারণের ভরণপোষণের সমগ্র দায়িত্ব কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের—প্রাদেশিক সরকারের নয়।

আজকের খাদ্য বিভাগের ভারপ্রাপ্ত মন্ত্রী মি: সুরাবর্দ্দীকে আমরা বোলবো—সকলের আগে Central Governmentকে বলুন "দায়িত্ব তোমার আমার নয়; অসন্তুষ্ট, বিক্ষুব্ধ, বুভুক্ষু বাংলাকে আগে রক্ষা কর; তারপর তার বুকের উপর দিয়ে লড়াই চালিয়ে যাও। এবং যদি বাংলাদেশকে বাঁচাতে হয় তাহোলে এ দায়িত্ব তোমাকেই পালন কোরতে হবে।" এই কথা স্পষ্ট কোরে বোলে আজ কাজ আরম্ভ কোরতে হবে। Denial policyর ফলে যখন এদেশের হাজার হাজার লোক গৃহহারা হয় তখন ফজলুল হক্‌কে বার বার কোরে বোলেছিলাম এই কথাটাই কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারকে দৃঢ়ভাবে বলতে,—কিন্তু তা বলতে বা তদনুযায়ী কাজ করবার মত সাহস তাঁর ছিল না। এই denial policyর দরুণ বাংলার বুক ফেটে গেছে; হাহাকার ও আর্ত্তনাদে বাংলার সমগ্র জনপদ ভ'রে উঠেছে। Denial policy বাংলার অর্থ ব্যবস্থাকে বিপর্য্যস্ত ক'রেছে—বাংলার মাল চলাচল ও অবাধ আমদানী রপ্তানীকে করেছে ব্যাহত এবং সর্ব্বোপরি এই denial policy প্রবর্ত্তন ক'রে বাংলাদেশের সমগ্র নিম্নভূমি অর্থাৎ বরিশাল, কুমিল্লা, নোয়াখালী, চট্টগ্রাম এবং মেদিনীপুরের সমস্ত চাল কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের হুকুমে এবং প্রাদেশিক সরকারের তদ্বিরে ও তত্ত্বাবধানে বাংলার বাহিরে যেদিন সহসা স্থানান্তরিত হলো—সেই দিনই বাংলার সর্ব্বনাশের সকল আয়োজন পরিপূর্ণ হ'য়ে উঠলো। কিন্তু বাংলার সেদিনের কর্ণধার "হক" মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী মূঢ় ঔদাসীন্যে শুধু ধ্বংসের এই আয়োজনকে পূর্ণাঙ্গ ক'রে তুলেছিলেন তা নয়, তাঁরা এ দৃশ্য উপভোগ করছিলেন। এই denial policyর সঙ্গে পাল্লা দিয়ে তৎকালীন Civil Supply Departmentএর Directorate চলছিলেন। তখনকার মন্ত্রীদের সঙ্গে এই বিভাগের কার্য্যতঃ কোন সম্পর্কই ছিলো না। কোথায় কত চাল কেনা হয়, সে চাল কোথায় চলে যায়, এ নিয়ে মাথা ঘামাবার প্রয়োজনীয়তা মন্ত্রীদের ছিল না। চাল কিনতো Director, Control করতো তারা, নিজেদের খেয়ালমত তারা চলতেই অভ্যস্ত ছিল, শুধু নৈবেদ্যের কলার মত আমাদের ঠুঁটো জগন্নাথ মন্ত্রিপ্রবর তাঁর মাসান্তের পাওনা মিটিয়ে নিয়ে নিশ্চিন্তে থাকতেন।

বাংলার চাল চ'লে গেল মরিসাসে, আফ্রিকায়, সিলোনে—মন্ত্রিরা নাকে সর্ষের তেল দেলে ঘুমোতে লাগলেন। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের তরফ থেকে লক্ষ লক্ষ মণ চাল কেনা হলো কিন্তু আমাদের মন্ত্রীরা চুপ ক'রে চেয়ে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের এই উদ্যম ও কর্ম্মতৎপরতাকে তারিফ করতে লাগলেন।

এই সময়েই এলো মেদিনীপুরের ব্যাপার। মেদিনীপুরে যখন গেলাম সেখানে তৎকালীন মাননীয় মন্ত্রী শ্রীযুক্ত সন্তোষ কুমার বসু মহাশয়ের সামনেই District Magistrate বোলেছিলেন যে মেদিনীপুর থেকে তখনো চাল রপ্তানি হোচ্ছে। তখনো—অর্থাৎ যখন সমগ্র মেদিনীপুরের বুকের উপর ব'সে মহামারী, মৃত্যু ও দুর্ভিক্ষ এক সঙ্গে অট্টহাসি হাসছে, তখনো—রপ্তানী আটকাতে পারেন নি মন্ত্রীরা। অথচ, মহামান্য ঢাকার নবাব বাহাদুর নির্ব্বিকারভাবে এই পরিষদের সম্মুখে ব'লে গেলেন যে, চাল নাকি বাংলার বাইরে যায়ই নি!! বাংলার বাইরে বাংলার ধান চাল অবাধে চোলে যাচ্ছিল; বাধা দেওয়া দূরে থাক্—একটা মুখের প্রতিবাদ করবার পর্য্যন্ত সাহস ছিলো না!! সমস্ত ব্যাপারটাকেই তাঁরা গুলিয়ে ফেলেছিলেন। আমদানি, রপ্তানি, বিলি, ব্যবস্থা,—সব ক্ষেত্রে সেই একই অক্ষমতা বিগত মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলের বেলায়

প্রত্যক্ষ হয়ে উঠেছিলো। কোন ব্যাপারেই স্থির সিদ্ধান্ত কিছু না করার দরুণ তাঁদের প্রতি দলের লোকেরা আস্থাহীন হোয়ে পোড়লো (A member from the opposition : আস্থাহীন হয়েছিলো ঘুষখোরেরা)। একদিকে denial policy ও তৎকালীন Civil Supply Departmentএর স্বেচ্ছাচারিতা, অন্যদিকে মিলমালিক, ধনী পুঁজিপতি, এবং ব্যবসায়ীরা লেলিয়ে দিলে সেদিন বাংলার পল্লীতে পল্লীতে তাদের অনুচরদের। হিতাহিত জ্ঞান হারিয়ে সেদিন তারা চাল কিনেছে। এবং তাদের এই লুণ্ঠনকার্য্যের সহায়তা করেছে সমগ্রভাবে গত মন্ত্রীসভা এবং বিশেষভাবে ঢাকার নবাব সাহেব। তার হিসেব আজো আমাদের মাথা গুলিয়ে দেয়: আজো পোর্ট ট্রাষ্টের কাছে দেড় বৎসরের উপযোগী, ট্রাম কোম্পানীর এক বৎসরের, রেলওয়ে কোম্পানীর এক বৎসরের, স্যাওয়ালেসের সংখ্যাতীত এবং বেঙ্গল চেম্বার অব কমার্সের প্রত্যেকটি কনষ্টিটুয়েন্টের একবৎসরের গোরাকী চাল মজুত আছে।

আমরা সুরাবর্দ্দী সাহেবকে এই কথা বলবো—আগামীতে আমাদের যে ফসল উঠবে তা পেতে আর ৪।৫ মাসের বেশী বাকি নাই; কাজেই ৪।৫ মাসের উপযোগী চালের বেশী কাউকে রাখ্‌তে দেওয়া উচিত হবে না। এবং নূতন ফসল যাতে এই সব বড় বড় ধনীরা বেশী ক'রে না কিন্‌তে পারে, সে দিকেও কঠোর দৃষ্টি রাখ্‌তে হবে। এইটে করবার সাহস যদি তাঁর থাকে তবে তিনি মন্ত্রিত্ব করুন। বাংলাদেশই যদি না বাঁচে তবে আমরা সুরাবর্দ্দী সাহেবকে নিয়ে কি করবো? সুরাবর্দ্দী সাহেব গেলে, আর এক সুরাবর্দ্দী পাবো। ফজলুল হক গিয়েছে আবার ফজলুল হক হবে, বাংলাদেশকে মেরে আমরা মন্ত্রীত্ব বাঁচাবো না। বাংলাদেশ বেঁচে থাক্‌লে হাজার হাজার মন্ত্রী আমরা গড়তে পারবো—মন্ত্রীত্ব কেড়ে নিয়ে তাড়িয়ে দিতে পারব। সেদিনে যেমন বিরাট একটা ধাপ্পাবাজির উপর দিয়ে সমস্ত জিনিষটা চলেছিল তা আজ চল্‌ছে না। আমার বন্ধু ডা: সান্যালের কথার উল্লেখ কোরে বোলতে পারি—যে আজকের মন্ত্রী সমস্যাটার সমাধানের জন্য অন্ততঃ চেষ্টা কোরছেন। কিন্তু বিগত মন্ত্রী সে চেষ্টাটুকু পর্য্যন্ত করেন নি, তাঁরা একমাত্র মন্ত্রিত্ব বজায় রাখ্‌তে সকল শক্তি নিয়োগ করেছিলেন; আর ঠিক সেই জন্যেই মন্ত্রিত্ব তাঁদের ভাগ্যে সইল না। ভূতপূর্ব্ব মন্ত্রিদের সম্পর্কে ডা: সান্যালের একটি বচন উদ্ধৃত ক'রেই আমার বক্তব্য শেষ করবো; Sir, we have already explained fully how the present Government particularly the Minister in charge, has lost the confidence of all sections including the members of his own party, and the file must be entrusted to somebody more competent and who may be in a position to deliver goods and to revise the whole thing properly. ডা: সান্যালের পরামর্শ মতই আজ বাংলার খাদ্য-বিভাগ ভূতপূর্ব্ব মন্ত্রীর হাত থেকে কেড়ে নিয়ে আমরা যোগ্যতর মন্ত্রীর হাতে দায়িত্ব ন্যস্ত করেছি এবং আশা করি ডা: সান্যালের ও তাঁর দলের সাহায্য থেকে আমরা বঞ্চিত হব না। ভূতপূর্ব্ব মন্ত্রী সম্পর্কে উদ্ধৃত উক্তির ন্যায় মন্তব্য ক'রেও সেদিন official congress সেদিনকার মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীকে সমর্থন করেছিলেন; আর আজ ডা: সান্যাল বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রী সম্পর্কে যে মন্তব্য করেছেন, তারপরও যদি বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রীসভা official congressএর সমর্থন না পান—তাহ'লেই congress আর so called congressএর পার্থক্য স্পষ্ট হ'য়ে ফুটে উঠবে।

কংগ্রেসের তথাকথিত অন্য শাখার সভ্যগণ আমার বক্তৃতার সময় সব চাইতে বাধা প্রদান করেছেন এবং আমার প্রতি কটুক্তি বর্ষণ করেছেন। অবশ্য এর কারণও আছে। চাল সমস্যা নিয়ে চাল দিতে যেয়েই বিগত মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীর পতন হ'য়েছিল। আজকের চাল সমস্যা সম্বন্ধীয়

বিতর্কের সময় তাঁদের মনে সেকথা উদয় হওয়া একান্তই স্বাভাবিক এবং এ আশা মনে ওঠাও বিচিত্র নয় যে হয়তো এই চাল সমস্যা অবলম্বন ক'রেই তাঁদের হৃতরাজ্য আবার তাঁরা ফিরে পাবেন! কিন্তু একান্ত প্রত্যাশার ন্যায়ই সে প্রত্যাশা ব্যর্থ হবে—এই কথাটা সবিনয়ে স্মরণ করিয়ে দিয়েই আজকের মত বিদায় হই।

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহাশয়, বর্তমানে খাবার বিষয়ে আলোচনা চলেছে। বর্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর বক্তৃতা এর পূর্বে শুনেছি এই খাদ্য সমস্যা নিয়ে যখন এ পাশে তারা বোসেছিলেন। ঠিক সেই সময় নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী ও দিকে আমাদের সঙ্গে বোসে যে বক্তৃতা কোরতেন তাও আমরা শুনেছি, তাঁর বর্তমান বক্তৃতাও শুনলাম, এ সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা কোরতে হবে। যখন বর্তমান মন্ত্রীরা এখানে বোসতেন তখন ওঁরা চিৎকার কোরতেন। আমাদের দলের মন্ত্রীরা ওখানে বোসতেন তখন চালের দর ছিল ১৬৲ টাকা। তখন ওরা চিৎকার কোরে বোলতেন, আমরা যদি ওখানে একবার বোসতে পারি তাহোলে সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই দর কম হবে। আমাদের গতবারের মন্ত্রী মহাশয়েরা একটু ভদ্রভাবে বিবেচনা করেছিলেন। এটা তাদের ভুল হয়েছিল। তাঁরা তথাকথিত ইস্পাহানি কোম্পানি, স ওয়ালেস কোম্পানিকে যদি contract না দিতেন তো ১৫।১৬ টাকা দর উঠতো না। সেই দুই কোম্পানি মিলে গেল, তাদের সঙ্গে যারা চাল খরিদ কোরে রেখেছিল distribution করবার জন্য সেটা তারা ছাড়লো না এবং যেখানে সেখানে রেখে দিয়েছে। সেখানে ৩ লক্ষ টাকা তারা পকেটে গুছবেন—legal wayতে, illegal way যেটা আছে সেটা বাদ দিয়েও।

এখন ওঁরা দেশের মঙ্গল করবার জন্য ওখানে গিয়েছেন, খুব কোরে দেশের মঙ্গল কোরছেন। তখন তাই ওরা বোলেছিলেন দর বেড়ে যাচ্ছে, আমরা দর কমাতে চাই। এখন কিন্তু দর ১৬৲ টাকা থেকে মাত্র ৪০৲ টাকা। আপনাদেরও কাজ সঙ্গে ঠিক হোয়ে যাচ্ছে, আড়াই শো টাকা থেকে ৫০০৲ টাকা হোয়েছে। তাছাড়া allowanceও তো জোমে যাচ্ছে। কিন্তু আমরা ওদের কাছে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরতে চাই—ভোটতো আসছে কাল। ভোটের কথা নরেন্দ্র চক্রবর্ত্তীকে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরতে চাই তখনকার ভোটে তো আপনি ১৬৲ টাকার দিকে ছিলেন, আর আজ ১৬৲-১৭৲ টাকা উড়ে গিয়ে একেবারে ৪০৲ টাকায় এসেছে। আর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নরেন চক্রবর্ত্তীরও বক্তৃতা হোচ্ছে "এ Minister চেষ্টা কোরছেন!!" সেবারে সন্তোষ বাবু ভুল কোরে ছিলেন। আর আজ পার্লামেণ্টারী সেক্রেটারী না হোয়েও নরেন বাবু বেশ Writers' Buildingsএ বোসছেন। সে বারে নরেন চক্রবর্ত্তীকে তিনি সেখানে বসাতে পারেন নি। নরেন চক্রবর্ত্তী

* * * * * * noise and disturbance.)

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: On a point of order, Sir. Why does the honourable member address like that?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Zaman, exception has been taken to your utterance of the name in that way. Please utter the full name—Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakravarty.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: আচ্ছা আমি বোলছি শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী মহাশয় সেক্রেটারী হোয়ে নানা জায়গায় ঘোরা ফেরা আরম্ভ কোরলেন। তখন food এর আর কোন দরকার হয় নাই। সেই নরেন চক্রবর্ত্তী—না না আমি ভুলে গেছিলাম, শ্রী শ্রীল নরেন্দ্র চক্রবর্ত্তী—আমি ঘরের কথা বাইরে এনে বেফাস কোরে দিতে চাইনে। হাটে হাঁড়ি ভাঙতে চাইনে, তাহোলে লোকে বোলবে ছিঃ চক্রবর্ত্তী বাংলাদেশের লোক, তাকে ওরা এম্নি কোরে জাৎ নেড়ে দিলে।

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Mr. Zaman, I ask you to come to food. You are indulging too much in personalities. I will not allow you to indulge so much in personalitits.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: যাক, আমাদের যেখানে যে কংগ্রেসের member রোয়েছে যাঁরা কংগ্রেসকে বিশ্বাস করে, তারা কংগ্রেসের জন্য প্রাণ দিতে প্রস্তুত আছে। যেই কংগ্রেস থেকে বিদ্রোহ কোরছে আর সেই মুখে শ্রীনরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী বোলছে—So called Congress. লজ্জা নাই ওর, ভুলে গেছে সেদিনের কথা।

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Zaman, do not bring in irrelevant matters.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: Sir, আমি বোলছি foodএর কথাই এখানে উঠছে। কারণ নরেন বাবুর এখন দশ ছটাকের জায়গায় বিশ ছটাকের দরকার। সেই বিশ ছটাক যোগাড় করবার জন্যই শ্রীল নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী মহাশয় বঙ্গীয় কংগ্রেস কেন সমস্ত বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গে বিদ্রোহ কোরে মুস্লীম লীগের সঙ্গে বোসে দেশের food problem solve কোরছেন। তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তথাকথিত শ্রী নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী মহাশয় যাদের লেজ ধোরে টেনে নিয়েছেন এবং যাদের লেজ হাতে নিয়ে বোসে আছেন তাদের বোলছি brain ঠাণ্ডা রেখো, cool রেখো; গরম মাথায় চিন্তা কোরলে চোলবে না। যখন এখান থেকে যাওয়া হোয়েছে তখন বলা হোয়েছে অনেক কথা। সেই কথার further discussion কোরতে চাই না। কিন্তু আমি জানিয়ে দিতে চাই গভর্ণমেণ্ট দল Party meetingএ কলকাতায় অনেকগুলি দোকান যে খোলা হবে তার জন্য application ওঁদের দলের লোকের কাছে চেয়েছেন। অর্থাৎ কলকাতার পাড়ায় পাড়ায় অনেকগুলি দোকান খোলা হবে। সেই সব দোকানে যারা এম. এল. এ. আছেন, তাদের বোলেছেন তোমাদের লোক দাও—আমরা চাকরী দেবা। তাদের কেউ manager, কেউ salesman হোয়ে কাজ কোরবে। ইস্পাহানি কোম্পানি নাকি ১৪ লক্ষ মণ চাল কলকাতার জন্য দেবে। আমি জিজ্ঞাসা কোরছি এই ১৪ লক্ষ মণ চাল ইস্পাহানি কোম্পানি যে দেবে সে চাল কোথা থেকে এলো? বাংলা দেশের আজকে অবস্থা কি? মিলওয়ালাদের জন্য বন্দোবস্ত হোয়েছে। কলকাতার বড় লোকদের জন্য বন্দোবস্ত হোয়েছে, factoryর জন্য হোয়েছে, soldiers দের জন্য হোয়েছে। তথাকথিত শ্রীল শ্রীযুত নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী and others যাঁরা মন্ত্রীদের পাশে বোসে আছেন, যাঁরা কৃষকের ভোটে এখানে এসে Parliamentary Secretary হোয়ে বোসেছেন তাদের স্মরণ করিয়ে দিচ্ছি শুধু কলকাতার পাড়ায় পাড়ায় দোকান খুলেই চোলবেনা। কৃষকের দরজায় দরজায় দোকান খুলতে হবে। এবং তাদের চাল দিতে হবে।

(NAWABZADA K. NASARULLA: হায়রে জামান!!) আমি জানি, নছরুল্লা সাহেবকে জানি, সবাইকেই জানি। এর মধ্যে কোথায় চাল আছে—সেইটের খোঁজে ওঁরা বেরিয়েছিলেন। দেশের লোককে এবং অন্যান্য countryর লোককে ধোঁকা দেবার জন্যে। তাছাড়া ওঁরা ঠিক কোরে ফেলেছেন যে বাংলার কৃষকেরা দিনে দশ ছটাক কোরে খাবে। একটা কথা মনে এসে পড়লো। জারের আমল যখন রাশিয়ায় প্রায় শেষ হলো, কৃষকেরা অনাহারে, অর্দ্ধাহারে থাকিয়া দলে দলে রুটির জন্য বাহির হইয়াছিল তখন সেখানকার রাণী জিজ্ঞাসা কোরেছিলেন "ওরা কি চায়"? একজন বোল্লে—"রুটি চায়, কিন্তু রুটিতো নাই"। "রুটি যদি নাই তাহোলে পোলাও খাক" রাণী এই কথা বোলেছিলেন। বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীও সেই পোলাওয়ের ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন। কলকাতায় তো চাল-ডাল ঠিক আছে। কৃষকদের ভিং খুড়ে, মড়াই মাচা যা কিছু আছে ভেঙ্গে দেখে এসো চাল আছে কিনা! কিন্তু এখানে রোয়েছে ইস্পাহানি ও সা ওয়ালেস কোম্পানির বড়

বড় গুলাম, সেখানে যেতে সাহস পান না। কিন্তু গরীব কৃষকের ঘরে ঘরে যাবার খুব সাহস হোয়েছে। সেখানে গিয়ে তাদের সর্বস্ব কেড়ে এনে তাদের মাত্র দশ ছটাক কোরে খেতে দেবে! যিনি Food Minister তাঁর দশ ছটাকে চোলতে পারে। তিনি চা খান, বিস্কুট খান, চপ, কাটলেট খান, ছোট হাজিরি বড় হাজিরি খান সকাল বেলায়। দুপুর বেলায় Grand Hotelএ খানা খান; মাংস, পোলাও, চপ, কাটলেট, একটা একটা নিয়ে চপ চপ কোরে খান; কাজেই উনিতে মনে কোরবেনই যে দশ ছটাকে হবে। আহা! কি কৃষক দরদী! যাঁরা ওঁদের সঙ্গে আছেন—তাঁরাও এখানে আসার পর মনে কোরছেন—বা, বা, দশ ছটাকে তো বেশ হোয়ে যায়। কারণ—পোলাও মাংসতো তাঁদেরও চলে। জ্ঞান একেবারে নাই, নৈলে মন্ত্রী পদ হোয়েই বুঝেছেন কেন যে আর যেতে হবে না ফিরে। শ্রী নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তী তো এত ছঁশিয়ার, তিনি কেন Ministerকে বোলে দিলেন না—দেখো দশ ছটাক দিও না, দশ ছটাক চালে কৃষকের এক বেলাও হয় না। তারপরে এই জিনিষ ভালো কোরে বুঝতে হবে—কলকাতা আর হাবড়া—ধান-চালের তল্লাসী থেকে বাদ দেওয়া হোয়েছে কেন? নিশ্চয়ই এর একটা কারণ আছে। যে যেমন লোকের সঙ্গে মেশে তার তেমি বুদ্ধি হয়—(At this stage his alloted time being expired) Speaker মহোদয়ের কাছে আমি আরো দু মিনিট সময় চাই।

Mr. SPEAKER : Mr Zaman, please finish soon.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN : আজ সকলের আগে বাংলার কথা ওদের ভাবা উচিত। আর আজ তা না ভেবে সাদা চামড়াদের চাল দিচ্ছেন—তাদের factory যাতে বজায় থাকে এবং তাদের সাহায্যে নিজেদের গদিও যাতে ঠিক থাকে। তারা চাইছে, আমাদের Soldiers দের জন্য food দাও, আমাদের মিল চালু রাখবার জন্য চাল দাও, আর ওঁরা অম্নি তাদের সঙ্গে মিলে মিশে বাংলাদেশকে শেষ করবার জন্য প্রস্তুত হোয়েছেন।

Mr. SPEAKER : Mr. Zaman, your time is up.

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN: আর দু মিনিট, Sir. আমি আজকে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরতে চাই ওরা যে দেশের কাজ কোরছেন এবং গাঁয়ে গাঁয়ে বেরিয়েছেন—চাল দেশের লোক লুকিয়ে রেখেছে তাই খুঁজে বার করবার জন্য। তার পূর্ব্বে নিজেরা কজন খেয়েছেন কিনা—ওঁদের কাছে কোন চাল আছে কিনা! যদি থাকে সে চাল দেশের সাম্নে বের কোরে দিতে হবে। আর একটা কথাও শোনা যাচ্ছে, ইস্পাহানি কোম্পানিকে এক কোটি আশি লক্ষ টাকা ওঁরা আগাম দিয়েছেন। ওঁদের নিজেদের বাঁচিয়ে রাখবার জন্য এবং চাল এনে সাদা চামড়াদের বাঁচাবার জন্য। শেষকালে শ্রীল নরেন্দ্র নারায়ণ চক্রবর্ত্তীকে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরতে চাই ১৬৲ টাকা থেকে ৪০৲ টাকা চালের দর উঠেছে, সেই ৪০৲ টাকাতেই ভোট দেবেন না ১৬৲ টাকার জন্য ভোট দেবেন?

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I must confess I have not been able to share with the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies——

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. This is a very unfortunate position. Mr. Mukherji should have been allowed to speak now.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: But Mr. Poddar is already on his legs.

Mr. SPEAKER: I intended to call upon Mr. Mukherji but Mr. Poddar rose first. Let him go on. I will call upon Mr. Mukherji next.

Mr. ANANDILAL PODDAR: As I was saying, Sir, I must confess have not been able to share with the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Suppli his abundant optimism and so far as the trade is concerned I may tell hi frankly that his statement has been read as an eloquent commentary o the fruitless drive he had undertaken with a view to escaping from th heavy responsibility of making a correct approach to the solution of th intriguing food problem. Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has bee playing the role of the hero in the tragic drama that is being enacted o the stage of this unfortunate province today. Like the Pied Piper, h tried to bring out all hoarded stocks and he feels that he has transferre the panic from the people to the hoarders. I must only tell him that h has forced the poor cultivators to part with their little stocks, often withou any immediate return and nipped in the bud the Grow More Food Scheme launched by more sensible persons. I am sure, Sir, cultivators will no feel encouraged to grow more crops for the fear that whatever stock they will build up, will be taken away by the Government Agents under executive threats. So long, most of these cultivators had some stock to fall back upon in critical days. Now, Sir, they will be in distress and resort to looting and Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy has to thank himself for these increasing crimes in the countryside.

Sir, the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies has not told us what useful statistics he has been able to secure as a result of what may be called his "under *taktaposh*" drive. What even the late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das could not achieve with a band of sacrificing workers, we are told the Hon'ble Minister has attained in course of a fortnight,—he has laid the foundation of Pallimangal Samities. But from all accounts, people are dying of hunger, lakhs of people are living on *sathi*, jack fruits and even mango skin, women with children are begging for a cup of rice water, and being desperate, men are committing suicide in order to escape from the responsibility of maintaining starving families. Thanks to the Defence of India Rules, the press is forbidden to publish these harrowing tales.

Sir, I have to thank the Hon'ble Minister for admitting that he counted his chickens before they were hatched and that he was able to state with a clear conscience that there was or would be sufficiency, because food-grains were coming to Bengal. I wonder how the Hon'ble Minister, who is reputed to be an intelligent man, could insist so long that there was no shortage of rice, knowing it fully well that Bengal has been a deficit province since the beginning of this century and had to depend for her rice supply on the Far Eastern countries and her neighbouring provinces. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister must have been aware that the total deficit in rice requirements for Bengal amounts to approximately six and a half crore maunds per annum in a normal average year with a normal population and after the fall of Burma and Siam, and with the influx of lakhs of people into this province, there has been an increasingly heavy shortage of rice. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy told the House in March last that the neighbouring provinces were not helping Bengal because "they are not satisfied", Sir, I am quoting his words—"that the Ministry in this province are dealing adequately with our own resources, that you are distributing

them properly, that you are putting down black marketing, hoarding and other anti-social activities." But, Sir, although the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy and his competent colleagues were ushered into the stage, with the blessings from Olympian heights, the neighbouring Provincial Governments would not realise that a new Messiah had come to Bengal and would not co-operate with him. Perhaps, they have realised to their cost that the Ministry has not only conspired to choke the normal channel of trade but are out to give legal protection to hoarders, with whose help they have to keep themselves in power. Sir, I am told on the very day the embargo was withdrawn in Assam, the agents of the Government of Bengal purchased rice at fabulous rates and even the man in the street of Assam, Central Provinces and Bihar knows that a particular Calcutta firm is responsible for sending the prices up to the spiral and yet Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy expects that the neighbouring provinces will allow his agents to inflate the prices.

Sir, on the 31st December, 1942, Mr H. S. Suhrawardy as Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League and of the Committee appointed at 40, Theatre Road, to consider the food problem in the province, issued a circular letter to as many as 19 associations. The said Committee *inter alia* recommended that Government should adopt the policy of 100 per cent. control and that all export of rice outside Bengal should be stopped, besides regional rationing of food supplies must be introduced. But today, Sir, can Hon'ble Mr Suhrawardy tell us what has been done by him to bring into effect the said resolutions of his Committee for the wholesale rationing of Calcutta with guaranteed regular supplies? While he sent his militia under thousands of squad masters in quest of hoarders in the countryside, he had not the courage to ascertain the quantity hoarded by the European traders and utility concerns in Calcutta and Howrah. He cannot think of introducing even a partial control today and perhaps has no strength and stamina to stop the military purchases as also exports of rice out of this depleted province. Will the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies tell the House if even on the 2nd June last, 8,000 tons of rice were exported from Calcutta? Does he know that rice is still being purchased in Calcutta in the shape of ration for the sailors of ships arriving in the Port and a huge quantity is being taken away "off the record"? Sir, it is a common knowledge that military authorities have accumulated huge stocks of wheat and rice and in absence of proper care and preservation, part of it has to be destroyed when it becomes unfit for human consumption. It is high time that these stocks were placed in the market and the military authorities were requested to make purchase from surplus areas from time to time according to requirements and according to quotas to be fixed by the Government. If panicky purchases by Government and utility concerns are allowed, I wonder how the price can be brought down by the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies, every thunder from whose office has been so far responsible for creating newer complications. And thanks to the crusader-like zeal of Mr. Suhrawardy, merchants have been driven out of trade, the normal channel of trade has been clogged and the much advertised scheme of purchases and distribution with the co-operation of

the people's committees has been given a decent burial. The so-called people's committees, his executive officers have been able to set up, will be obviously the agents for distribution or maldistribution of the little stocks that may be rightly and wrongly seized. Sir, so long as purchasing on behalf of the Government is concerned it has been entrusted to Messrs. M. A. H. Ispahani, who, it is announced in all seriousness, were approached to make a big sacrifice again for the sake of mother Bengal. Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy has told the House, that he consulted various Chambers and found no one who could undertake the task better than this firm. I would inform the House that so far as the Marwari Chamber and Marwari Association are concerned, this is far from the truth and I would ask Mr. Suhrawardy to let the House know when he invited the representatives of the different trade organisations in order to discuss the matter. Sir, my information is that there are many competitors, who are ready to accept the offer even on a lesser commission and I have yet to be convinced that the firm appointed will have to undergo a sacrifice. Is the Hon'ble Minister prepared to appoint a small committee consisting of some members representing the trade to examine the accounts of this firm as also its method of purchase? Then, Sir, I want to know the terms on which this sacrificing firm has been appointed as Government's purchasing agents as also the powers that are going to be delegated to it in this behalf. Will Mr. Suhrawardy let us know the terms on which the appointment has been made, the reasons why he has appointed only one agent, whether or not any money has been advanced to the agent and if so, on what basis and against what security as also what is the amount? If no security has been taken, why not? Whether any direction has been given to the agent to purchase any fixed quantity of a specified quality of rice within a fixed area? Has the agent been given any directions as to the price for which they are to buy? If so what steps have been taken to ascertain and secure compliance with those directions by the agent? Or has he been given unlimited powers as to the rate at which purchases have to be made? What is the guarantee that the agent will not purchase on its own account directly in his own name or indirectly in the name of its dummy duplicate firms? Does not the Hon'ble Minister consider it to be seriously prejudicial to the interests of the Province if the agent does so and does he propose to take steps with a view to checking this sort of purchase? May I know whether the purchases that are being made by the agent and its dummy firms are being carried on under the direct supervision of the local authorities or they are carrying on their activities as free lancers? Have the Government checked the accounts of the agent or do they propose to do so by comparing with the accounts of the firms from whom the agents have purchased the goods?

Sir, these are some of the questions which naturally arise in our minds. I know agents have been appointed by the Government of other provinces also, but nowhere the appointment has gone to one fortunate firm. Besides the activities of the agents appointed are being directed and supervised in minute details by officials and their accounts are almost daily checked and verified.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Mr. ANANDI LAL PODDAR: May I have two more minutes, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. ANANDI LAL PODDAR: Sir, I congratulate the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy on being able to show his colleagues in the Muslim League that Pakistan is working in Bengal but I may tell him that this will not deceive crores of his co-religionists in the countryside because their hungry stomachs will not be appeased. Sir, I must record my emphatic protest against this appointment and I am confident the people will not tolerate this nonsense. Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy places before the House accomplished facts and then pleads for co-operation. Is it putting aside party politics or pursuing the same in a shameless manner?

Then, Sir, the Ministry has promised to open 800 Government distributing centres in Calcutta and industrial area. In mufassal town also, rationing will take place through agents appointed by Government. I have already received reports that the few such centres opened so far have been entrusted to men, who, to quote the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies, are reliable and care has been taken so that not a single person having any sympathy for the opposition in this House has been appointed. Again, there will be a great scope for nepotism in the work of calculating the *par capita* income of a family as food-grains will be distributed from these shops to families whose income does not exceed certain fixed amount. The Chambers had been crying hoarse for leaving the whole affair to the trade

Sir, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy knows he or his colleagues cannot solve the food problem but still he has to be very busy in manufacturing new plans not for solution of the problem but for raising fresh smoke-screens to avoid the real issue. Jingling silver will follow into the pockets of their supporters but the Hon'ble Civil Supply Minister will, so far as the poor are concerned, continue to imitate the famous Prince of Arabian Nights whose feast to beggars was rich dish covers with nothing below them.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NARAYAN MUKERJI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the resolution brought by my friend Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal. I am a mufassal member representing the rural constituency and naturally the acute distress prevalent in those areas appears uppermost in my thoughts.

But, Sir, today when coming to this Assembly from my residence in South Calcutta, I saw a sad sight at the corner of Gariahat Road and Dover Lane junction—a boy of 10 years lying on the pavement—flies swarming on his mouth, tears rolling down the cheeks in death agony. This part of the town is inhabited by affluent people—people with heart too. But they feel that they are helpless to tackle the problem, as the foodstuffs in quantity required by them are not available even by spending money.

Everything is under control, and unless the Government comes forward nothing can be done by individual efforts. This is not a solitary example but may be a daily occurrence in different parts of the country.

Sir, I had been released from detention only about a fortnight back and naturally have not been able to cover the vast rural area fully. The small area that I have been able to move about has given me sufficient general information to justify my criticism against the Government. I do admit, Sir, that the Government has undoubtedly shown quickness and dash that is wanted under the present situation but, Sir, the Ministry I understand did not take all the parties fully into their confidence when planning food census and for that the working out of the scheme has suffered—nay, deviated as originally planned—in one word we may even say, it has failed.

Food committees were formed by the local officials which were filled up with their protegees and favourites. The Congressmen and men of independent views have been religiously excluded—nay, avoided. Petty officials were vested with extensive powers. Corruption and bribery were rampant. I have received many complaints and I cite a case as an example. This case went up to the Subdivisional Officer of Arambagh——

"40 maunds of paddy was recorded to be 600 maunds and after petition to the Subdivisional Officer a fresh enquiry was made and stock found to be only 40 maunds."

The reason for overestimate, I understand, is for refusal to pay bribe. I have this information in writing from Mr. Radha Nath Panja, B.L., practising lawyer of Arambagh Court.

The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies has mentioned in his statement on page 3 that the District Magistrates sent for the large agriculturists and impressed upon them the advisability of liquifying their stock by selling, loaning or by charitable distribution. They were warned also that failure to do so would mean requisition of the stock at price considered reasonable by the Government.

What was the result? I read a relevant portion of one letter I have received from Mr. Matilal Roy of Indas——

"On the whole this Drive has done more evil than good to the villages, where in near future the number of starving population will be multiplied. The authorities failed to impress upon the people the intention of the Government in inaugurating this Drive, and the result was that those who had surplus stock of food got panicky and sold their surplus stock before their houses were searched. And now there is practically speaking no surplus food in villages and there is no alternative left to save the situation."

The letter from Mr. Ranendra Nath Singha Roy of Darhatta, Hooghly, states:—

"The food census drive has made the matter worse as the agriculturists not knowing the benefit of the scheme and also from many rumours, most of them sold their crops at any rate to the big merchants of the town even not thinking of their own necessity."

I also read out a portion of a letter I received from Mr. Narendra Nath Sen, no less responsible person than the Vice-Chairman of the Hooghly District Board:—

"The present Food Drive has made the people apprehensive that their stock of paddy would be taken away and many of them sold away large quantities of paddy at low prices and these have probably been taken to Calcutta and Howrah. Practically famine conditions are prevailing in this district due to acute shortage of rice and the high prices of all foodstuffs and other necessaries of life".

I believe this is more than enough.

I hold the Government responsible for this situation. Their intention might have been good at the start but due to faulty planning and apathy to collaborate with responsible parties, the situation has worsened.

Now, Sir, about the scale of rationing. It is very much underestimated. The agriculturists are in the habit of taking much larger quantities. Even the Government Jail Code allows a prisoner 12 chattaks a day rice diet. The hard labour the agriculturists will have to do in the sowing season demands larger rationing. Inadequate provision will tell upon their health and consequently affect the "Grow More Food" campaign.

Further allowance of 10 per cent excess due to maintenance of other household expenses such as clothes, medical necessities, etc., besides the food requirement, is, I consider, not only inadequate but absurd. In this connection I cannot but comment on the want of practical sense of the authorities. Provision for giving alms and expenses for deity such as Durga Puja expenses and charity during Ramjan period, etc., have not been considered.

Now, Sir, my district is a deficit district for years. I learn that in Arambagh subdivision alone five lakhs of maunds shortage have been estimated. All the 37 unions in Serampore subdivision as well as those of Sadar subdivision have been declared as deficit areas.

No doubt test relief work has been started, but the rate of wages are not only inadequate but also foodstuffs are not made available in the area so that people working in the relief works can buy rice.

In this connection I read out the correspondence between the Vice-Chairman of the Hooghly District Board and the District Magistrate, which runs thus: With reference to your letter No. 929, dated the 20th May, 1943, regarding selling of rice at Rs. 15 to the labourer employed in Test Relief Work, I have the honour to state that the high prices of rice were taken into consideration when the rate of wages was fixed and it is for this abnormal high price of rice the rate has been enhanced considerably. If Government sells rice at Rs. 15 after purchasing at the market rate Government will have to incur additional loss. I therefore think that no useful purpose will be served by moving Government in the matter. And the rate of labour charge is only nine annas per day and he has to buy rice at 14 annas per seer.

The Vice-Chairman's letter runs thus: With reference to your letter No. 253, dated the 27th May, 1943, I have the honour to state that at each of the test relief centres about Rs. 1,200 is paid daily as wages to about 2,000 workers for the purchase of rice with the money and experience utmost difficulty for want of sufficient stock in the village as about four maunds of rice which can be purchased with Rs. 1,200 is not always available daily in one or two or three villages near the test relief centres. The result is that rice of inferior qualities and at prices higher than the market rate have to be purchased by these workers and there has been scarcity of the articles in the locality so that the villagers are sometimes unable to get adequate supplies for their families.

So far no action has been taken.

Situation has been further complicated by this drive resulting in the outflow of whatever little surplus some people had. So with all the emphasis that I can command I ask the Government to declare famine in my district and to arrange for the import of foodstuffs inside the district as well as put embargo on transfer of the individual surplus out of the unions. Sales are still being effected and rice being sent away. It is surprising that paddy is now being sold out of the district as seed; this is only possible where everything is in a mess as no seed is required at this time of the year, sowing being already complete.

I further ask the Government to start free canteen immediately as suggested in the statement of the Hon'ble Minister.

Another point on which I would like to draw the attention of the Ministry is that in the planning of the "Grow More Food" campaign they should take all the parties and leaders of the nations in confidence and try to work out the campaign in collaboration with these leaders and experts.

Mere distribution of leaflets will not help. Agricultural loan, seeds, manures are to be made available and that in time which seldom happens in the leisurely way the Government moves.

We are facing a national crisis. Let me hope every one of us will rise to the occasion forgetting party politics.

Mr. PUSPAJIT BARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, three months or more ago we had a discussion on food in this House when the price of rice was Rs. 15 per maund, and today we are discussing the problem of food when the price of rice is about 35 to 40 rupees per maund. Sir, we shall not perhaps be incorrect and unjustified if we say that today we are discussing the question of life and death of the people of Bengal. Sir, it would not be unfair if I say that the food crisis has appeared in the province for the shortage of foodgrains due to natural calamities and heavy influx of people, both civil and military, in Bengal. But it would also not be untrue and an exaggeration to say that the present acute food crisis is mainly the direct outcome of the half-hearted, unwise and insincere policy of both the past and the present Ministry of the province.

Sir, we agree with Mr. N. R. Sarker who delivered a thoughtful speech on the other day in the Food Conference that the question of food is an all-India question and it should be discussed on an all-India basis instead of

regional or provincial basis. But when we compare the food position of other provinces such as Bombay, Madras, Assam and Bihar which are no less dependent for food-grains on other provinces we find that they are in a comfortable and better position than Bengal.

Sir, the food situation in Bengal has reached its present position neither in a day nor in a year but it had begun to deteriorate from more than two years ago. It was and it is due to the half-hearted, thoughtless and insincere policy of the past and the present Ministry that had been followed and is being followed from time to time.

Sir, the food position has reached to such an extent that the people, specially in rural areas, are selling their last belongings to provide themselves with food and cloths. They have lost their home, they have lost their shame and they have lost their everything which distinguishes human being from beast. They are swelling the numbers of street beggars in a half-naked or naked condition and fighting with street dogs for a scramp of food in the streets of the towns and in the houses of the villagers and increasing the number of deaths in the street and in the huts.

Sir, such is the condition of the people of the province. The prices of food-grains are soaring higher and higher day by day. The long suspected shortage of foodstuff has brought the prices of food-grains abnormally higher. Nobody knows when the soaring prices would reach to its last limit. Price of rice now varies from Rs. 35 to Rs. 40 per maund in different parts of the province. The food situation has reached to such a stage that some places of the province should be declared famine areas.

Sir, there is undoubtedly shortage of rice in the province and there is no suspicion about the fact.

Sir, in the marketing report on rice the Government of India estimate the consumption *per capita* to be 344 lbs. a year. According to this calculation Bengal requires 92 lakhs tons of rice per year for the consumption of 60·3 million people in a normal time.

The average of last 11 years' rice production of Bengal, according to the statistics of the Director of Agriculture, Bengal, is 85·5 lakhs tons and according to India Government's estimate Bengal has a permanent deficit of 6·5 lakhs tons of rice per year.

Now, Sir, Bengal meets this deficit by importing rice from Burma, Bihar, Assam, Orissa and Nepal by known and unknown traders by known and unknown routes. It is no denial of the fact that the border districts of Bengal are generally fed by the rice of the border provinces. Thus, Sir, according to India Government's estimate of consumption Bengal proves to be a deficit province by about 6·5 lakhs tons in normal time.

Now, Sir, it is said that the year 1941-42 was a surplus year. But the calculation, taking Government estimate into account, shows that the year 1941-42 was not a huge surplus year. Taking into account the Director of Agriculture's report on production of rice which was estimated to be 99 lakhs tons we find an excess production of 13·5 lakhs tons on the basis of average of last 11 year's production.

Now, if we calculate the normal import of 4 lakhs tons of rice from Burma which has already been stopped in the year and the export of 3·5 lakhs tons to Ceylon and other places and the excess consumption of rice due to shortage of wheat supply we find the balance excess of only 5 lakhs tons. And now if we consider the Director of Agriculture's report of production of rice for the year 1941-42 to be true and if we calculate the India Government's estimate of consumption at 344 lbs. *per capita* per year for 60·3 million people, then our excess production of rice comes to only 7 lakhs tons, and again if we subtract the rice exported to Ceylon and other places which is 3·5 lakhs tons and the excess consumption of 1 lakh tons of rice, then our rice position comes down to 2·5 lakhs tons which is a very scanty surplus.

Now, Sir, the year 1942-43 can never be a surplus year as the production of rice according to the report of the Director of Agriculture, Bengal, is about 79 lakhs tons and if we consider the consumption at 344 lbs. *per capita* per year for 60·3 million people, which is 92 lakhs tons, we find a deficit of 10·5 lakhs tons of rice in this year.

(The member having reached the time-limit resumed his seat.)

Maulvi ABDUL HAMID SHAH: মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, গত বাজেট সেসনে বাংলার এই খাদ্য-সমস্যা নিয়ে কয়েক দিন যাবৎ লম্বা লম্বা বক্তৃতা ও অনেক কিছু হোয়েছে। আমাদের এই Assembly memberগণ তাতে অনেকেই অনেক কথা বোলেছেন, এবং প্রত্যেকেই শুনেছেন। আর বাংলার জনসাধারণও বোধ করি শুনেছে। গত ministry বর্ত্তমান থাকা কালে Council of Ministers বোলেছিলেন যে "বাংলা deficit province, বাংলায় যে খাদ্য আছে তাতে বাংলার অভাব পূরণ হোতে পারে না"। একথার পরেও বাংলা থেকে অনেক খাদ্য বিদেশে রপ্তানি হোয়ে যায়। তার জন্য তাঁরা বোলেছিলেন "বাংলার খাদ্য-সমস্যার যদি সমাধান কোরতে হয়, তাহোলে প্রত্যেক party থেকে party leaderদের নিয়ে একটা National Government অর্থাৎ একটা ministry যদি মিলিতভাবে গঠন কোরে তার সহযোগে সকলে মিলে চেষ্টা করা যায় তাহোলে বাংলার খাদ্য-সমস্যার একটা কিনারা হোতে পারে।" এমন কি, আমার মনে হয়,—তাঁরা একথা পর্য্যন্তও বোলেছিলেন যে, বাংলার খাদ্য-সমস্যার সমাধান কোরতে হোলে শুধু বিভিন্ন পার্টি-লিডারদের নিয়ে কর্ম্ম কোরলেই চোলবে না। ২৫০ জন মেম্বর যাঁরা আছেন তাঁরা সকলে এক উদ্দেশ্যে যদি কার্য্যে যোগদান করেন তাহোলেই খাদ্য-সমস্যার সহজে কিনারা হোতে পারে। কিন্তু আমাদের ফজলুল হক সাহেবের সেই আবেদন তখন কার্য্যকরী হয় নাই। সে পুরাণা ইতিহাস ঘাটতে চাই না, সেই ministry পদত্যাগ করায় এখন অন্য ministry এসে আসন গ্রহণ কোরেছেন। কিন্তু সেই আসন গ্রহণের পর তাঁরা যে কর্ম্মধারা অবলম্বন করে চলেছেন, তার একটু নমুনা দেখুন। মাননীয় খাদ্য-সচিব গ্রামের ভিতর Food Drive অর্থাৎ খাদ্যানুসন্ধান কার্য্য আরম্ভ করার কয়েক দিন পূর্ব্ব হইতে গ্রামবাসীদের নিকট যে প্রচার-পত্র বিলি করতে আরম্ভ কোরেছিলেন, তার heading বড় বড় অক্ষরে লেখা রোয়েছে—"আবেদন ও সতর্কবাণী!!" আবার তারই সঙ্গে সঙ্গে লিখিত রোয়েছে "দরিদ্র জনসাধারণকে আর উৎপীড়ন করা চলিবে না। সত্যই কি বাংলাদেশে খাদ্যশস্যের অভাব ঘটিয়াছে? না, নিশ্চয়ই না। যদিও খাদ্যদ্রব্যের মূল্য দিনের পর দিন বাড়িয়াই চলিয়াছে, এবং ফলে লক্ষ লক্ষ দরিদ্র দেশবাসী খুবই কষ্ট পাইতেছেন তথাপি দেশে সত্য সত্যই খাদ্যদ্রব্যের অভাব হয়

নাই।" এই হলো আমাদের গভর্ণমেণ্টের বিজ্ঞাপন ও প্রচার!! কাজেই এমন বিজ্ঞাপন যে গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে বেরিয়েছে, এবং যে গভর্ণমেণ্টের খাদ্য-সচিব মাননীয় মিঃ সুরাবর্দী সাহেবের মতন উপযুক্ত ও বিচক্ষণ মানুষ পূর্ব্ব হতে বাংলাকে surplus province বলে প্রকাশ্যে ঘোষণা কোরে এই রকম একটা drive campaignএর আরম্ভ কোরতে পারেন, তাদের কাছে বাংলার অনশনক্লিষ্ট অস্থিকঙ্কালসার গরীবের দল কি আশা করিতে পারে? বরং তাদের প্রভুদের মন খুসী রাখবারজন্য এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে বোলবেন "Bengal deficit country নয় surplus country" তাতে আশ্চর্য্য হবার কিছু নাই। কিন্তু আশ্চর্য্য হবার বিষয় এই যে, তারা কি সাহসে বাংলায় খাদ্যদ্রব্যের অভাব নাই এই অসম্ভব কথা বাংলার ঘরে ঘরে প্রচার কোরলেন। আমি জিজ্ঞাসা কোরছি —মাননীয় সুরাবর্দী সাহেবকে, তিনি বঙ্গীয় গভর্ণমেণ্টের একজন বিশিষ্ট দায়িত্বসম্পন্ন মানুষ হোয়ে এই রকম প্রকাশ্য ঘোষণার পর India Governmentএর কাছে এবং অন্যান্য sister Governmentএর কাছে গিয়ে কি কোরে বোল্লেন "আমাদের বাংলায় খাদ্য নাই, হে Central Government তুমি সাহায্য কর, হে বেহার গভর্ণমেণ্ট, হে উড়িষ্যা গভর্ণমেণ্ট, হে আসাম গভর্ণমেণ্ট তোমরা আমাদের সাহায্য করো।" "বাংলায় তো খাদ্যশস্যের অভাব নাই"— তুমি নিজেই বোলছো, তবে আবার আমরা সাহায্য কোরবো কেন? এই প্রশ্ন তারা যদি করতেন, তাহোলে তার কি জবাব ছিল?

ইহার পরেও মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের anti hoarding driveএর ব্যাপার দেখে ভেবেছিলাম নিশ্চয় এতে কিছু আছে। কিন্তু শেষ result হোলো কি? মাননীয় খাদ্য-সচিব গত-কল্য আমাদের Oppositionএর Leaderএর প্রশ্নের যে জবাব দিয়েছেন তাতে দেখা যায়, তিনি এত জোরে campaign চালিয়েও তার ফলে বাংলাকে surplus province বোলে প্রমাণ কোরতে পারেন নি। এমন কি বঙ্গের কোনও স্থান বিশেষে যে আবশ্যকের অতিরিক্ত খাদ্যদ্রব্য মজুত আছে, সে রকম কোন information'ও তিনি এ পর্য্যন্ত পান নাই। কাজেই তাঁর সাধের drive যে নিষ্ফল হইয়াছে একথা বলা যেতে পারে। তবে তিনি যে scheme কোরেছেন—তাতে একথা বলা যেতে পারে grow more food সম্বন্ধে তাঁর যে পরিকল্পনা, ঠিক সেমতে যদি কাজ কোরে চলেন, তাহোলে দেশে খাদ্যশস্যের production বেড়ে যাবে এবং বাংলার production বাড়লেই খাদ্য-সমস্যার কালে হয়তো কতকটা সমাধান হতে পারে।

তারপর তিনি বিভিন্ন প্রদেশ থেকে চাল আনতে পারে এমন একটি বিশেষ চালাক কোম্পানিকে বহু অনুসন্ধানের পর বার কোরেছেন। সে কোম্পানীটি যে খুব চালাক এবং ওস্তাদ তাতে সন্দেহ নাই; নৈলে বাংলার চাল নিয়ে এমন ছিনিমিনি খেলতে আর কেউ পারতো না (ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: সা সাহেবের family পর্য্যন্ত নয়?) তর্কের মধ্যে familyর কথা উল্লেখ করা ভদ্রতার বাহিরে (Protests from the Opposition benches, noise and interruption) * * * * চালাক না হোলে তার ব্যবসা থেকে অমনি অমনি চল্লিশ লাখ টাকা দিয়ে দেবে আমাদের এই বাংলার গরীব গভর্ণমেণ্টকে দান কোরে? এই যে উদারতা এর পশ্চাতে নিশ্চয়ই কিছু একটা মতলব (A voice from the Government benches: আপনাদের ছোট মন নিয়ে এত বড় দানের কল্পনাও সম্ভব নয়।) (Protests from the Opposition benches, noise and interruptions.) যা হউক উক্ত কোম্পানীর বদান্যতা সম্বন্ধে মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের statement পোড়ে যা ধারণা আমার হোয়েছে তাতে আমার একটা গল্প মনে পড়ছে। একটা দরিদ্র লোক তিন দিন ধরে উপবাসী।

কোন মহাজনের নিকটেই একটা কড়িও পেলো না। তার স্ত্রী অনেক তালাস কোরে একটী লোকের নিকট গিয়ে বল্লো দেখুন আমার স্বামী অনাহারে মৃতপ্রায় আমিও উপবাসী, আপনার কাছে ৫টী টাকা আছে; আমাকে ধার দিন আমি তিন মাস পরে (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: ওগুলো সব বাড়ীতে বোসে বোল্লেই ভালো হয়) দশটী টাকা দেবো, এমন কি আজ যে পঁচটী টাকা ধার নেবো, তা' হতেও এক টাকা আপনার তিন মাস পর যে দশ টাকা পাওনা হবে, তার মধ্যে ওয়াশীল দিয়ে মাত্র চারটী টাকা নিয়ে ঘরে যাচ্ছি! দেখুন ত, আমার মত এমন অগ্রিম আদায়ী খাতক আরো পেয়েছেন কি না? দাতা খাতকের কথায় গোলমাল না কোরে আমার একটা জরুরী কথা শুনুন। মিঃ সুরাবর্দী সাহেব গত বাজেট সেসনে বাজেটের সাধারণ আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে ইউরোপীয়ান পার্টির Leader Mr. Hendryর কথায় সায় দিয়ে যে কয়েকটী কথা বোলেছিলেন সেই কথা কয়টাই আজকে একবার দয়া কোরে বলুন! তিনি বোলেছিলেন—"throw out this Ministry which is sitting as an incubus on this Province. Throw it out and replace it by a national Ministry.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, এই সব ইংরাজীতে quotation নয়, লম্বা speech উনি পোড়ছেন, এতে সবারই সময় অনর্থক নষ্ট হবে।

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! order! মা সাহেব আপনি শেষ করুন!

Maulvi ABDUL HAMID SHAH: আমি জিজ্ঞাসা কোরছি আপনাদের কাছে আপনারা শুধু গোলমাল করে কি দেশের কোনও উপকার কর্ত্তে পারছেন? আমার ইংরাজী quotationএর মর্ম্ম আর কিছুই নয়, সবাইকে মিলিয়ে একটা National Government করুন এবং যাতে এই কাজটা করতে পারেন তার জন্য চেষ্টা করুন। সবাই মিলে যদি কাজে লাগা যায় তবেই বাংলাদেশের এই খাদ্য-সমস্যার কিনারা হোতে পারে (A voice: আপনাকে নিলে কেমন হয়?) কোনও party বিশেষের ministry দিয়ে তা হবে না।

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: তাহোলে চোলে আসুন। চোলে আসুন!!

Maulvi ABDUL HAMID SHAH: আসা যাওয়াইত জগতের নিয়ম!

Miss MIRA DUTTA GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are confronted with an unexpected crisis in our country. Not within living memory has food been so scarce even for our chronically famished people. Why is that so? England apparently suffers from no serious shortage although she does not produce even half the foodstuffs that she needs. It is reported that she has stocked food for consumption by the civil population to last over a considerable period of time and the British Government informs that food-ships are still sailing to England from America and Australia ploughing submarine-infested seas. Why has not food been similarly stocked in India for the civil population? Why are not food-ships sailing to India where many people are already starving? Is it not because we have not a free independent

Government responsible to its own people as England has got? Is not the present situation the most glaring pointer that our food problem is intimately connected with the question of our freedom and that those who seek to divorce the one from the other are the conscious fools of a rapacious and heartless Imperialism? The Government here have admitted that they had removed rice from coastal areas in Bengal according to their denial policy for fear of invasion. Did the Government try to remove the people from those areas also when they were removing the foodstuffs? No. Would, for instance, the British Government withdraw food from the Dover district for fear of German invasion and leave the civil population of Dover to their starving fate? Has not the Soviet Government tried to evacuate as much of their civil population as possible in spite of colossal difficulties whenever they had to remove foodstuffs from threatened areas? That is what happens in a country where a free Government is responsible to the people and enjoys their affection and confidence. That is where a peoples' war is conducted by a peoples' Government.

But, Sir, subtle agents of Imperialism have cropped up in this country. They say that food is separable from freedom. They have allied themselves with Clive Street and with the blackest political, economical and communal reaction in this country. They declare that what the previous peoples' Ministry could not achieve regarding food against entrenched British vested interests, the Muslim League Ministry will achieve and has achieved. And, behold, rice which was selling at Rs. 18 per maund on the last day of the last Ministry has now shot up to Rs. 36 per maund. And yet the so-called "Communists" led procession of hunger-marchers against the last Government and not now when the price of rice has increased twofold. Who will deny that the Muslim League Ministry which has entered itself into office by the back door by the grace of a British Governor and of British vested interests is the least competent body to look after the interests of the hungry people? The call has been made to the toiling peasants to grow more food for feeding the people. But would the Muslim League Ministry or their allies, the so-called "Communist Party of India" guarantee that the food to be grown will not be taken away from the hungry people under any conditions?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, never has the history of India been so besmirched since the time of Mirjafar as by these snakes in the grass. They opposed the last popular Ministry because it was not an all-Party Ministry including the Muslim League; now they support the Muslim League Ministry and oppose an all-party Ministry. Even a child can see that so long as we are under British rule, it is only a powerful patriotic popular Ministry which does not quake in its shoes in front of the Governor and Clive Street can alone tackle the grave food situation, if at all. A Ministry, which is sold to interests which are opposed to the interests of the people cannot do so. If we have to save our people, Sir, I submit that only a most powerful patriotic and representative Ministry may perhaps do so. Let us pull our weight together to this end.

(At this stage, the House was adjourned for 15 minutes for prayer.)

(After adjournment.)

Maulvi MD. MOZAMMEL HUQ: মাননীয় সভামুখ্য মহোদয়, আজ দুই দিন যাবৎ বাংলার food problem বা খাদ্য-সমস্যা সম্বন্ধে বহু আলোচনা হইয়াছে, আজ রাত্রি ৯টা পর্য্যন্ত আলোচনা হইবে এবং কালও হইবে, তার পরে কি? (A Member from the Opposition: তার পরে সমাধি।) এই যে বক্তৃতার ঝড় বহিয়া যাইতেছে—আরো বহিবে, তার পর কাল শেষ পালা হইয়া তার পরিণতি হইবে কি? পরিণতি হইবে ভোট। (Mr. ABU HOSSEIN SARKER: কি বোল্লেন? ভোজ?) ভোজ নয়, ভোট—ভোট—ভোট। তার পরে দেখা যাইবে—এই পারের ভোট বেশী, কি ঐ পারের ভোট বেশী। (Dr. NALINAKSHYA SANYAL: আপনি যেখানে আছেন সেখানেই থাকবেন।) আমি ত চিরকাল এই জায়গায়ই আছি, আমি ত স্থান পরিবর্ত্তন করি না। ঠিক জায়গায় আছি। এবং অনেককেই একবার এপারে আনিয়াছি, আর একবার ওপারে পাঠাইয়া দিয়াছি। আপনারা ত স্বার্থের খাতিরে একবার এপারে আসেন, আবার ওপারে যান—আমি আজ ৬ বৎসর এক জায়গাতেই আছি।

যাক, এখন বাংলাদেশের কি দুরবস্থা হইয়াছে তৎসম্পর্কে দু'চারটী কথা বলতে চাই। বাংলার দিকে দিকে—কেন্দ্রে কেন্দ্রে—বাংলার পল্লীতে পল্লীতে—ঘরে ঘরে এখন কি শব্দ শুনিতে পাইতেছি? হা অন্ন! হা অন্ন! অন্নের জন্য চারিদিকে আজ হাহাকার রব উঠিয়াছে। "ওগো একমুঠো ভাত দাও—একটু ফেন দাও—তিন দিন উপবাসী আছি—শরীর কাঁপিতেছে—আর দাঁড়াইতে পারিতেছিনা, ছেলেপিলে না খাইয়া মরিয়া যাইবে, ওগো দয়া কর, দয়া কর"—এই করুণ [illegible] ধ্বনিতে বাংলার আকাশ-বাতাস আজ মুখরিত! যাহারা সহরের অধিবাসী নহেন—গ্রাম হইতে যাঁহারা এখানে আসিয়াছেন—তাঁহারা সকলেই জানেন, বাংলায় আজ এমন কোন জেলা নাই যেখানে গ্রামে গ্রামে এইরূপ আর্ত্তনাদ উঠিতেছে না। চারিদিকের সেই আর্ত্তনাদের ভিতর এখানে এই Assemblyতে কি দেখিতেছি? এখানে সমস্ত ফাঁকি। দেশের এই দুর্দ্দিনেও এখানে কেবল লম্বা লম্বা বক্তৃতার পর্ব্ব আর ভোট যুদ্ধের আয়োজনে সকলেই মত্ত। বাঙলা জুড়িয়া বুভুক্ষু সর্ব্বহারাদের এই অনাহারের আর্ত্তনাদ—তাহাদের এই গগনভেদী চিৎকার। এ সমস্ত কি কিছুই নহে? এ সমস্ত ব্যাপার কি গ্রাহ্যের যোগ্যও নহে? গরীবের প্রাণ কি এতই তুচ্ছ জিনিষ? এতই অবহেলার জিনিষ? তোমাদের কি প্রাণ নাই? অন্নাভাবে গরীবেরা সব রাস্তায় পড়িয়া মরিবে, আর তোমরা সব বড় লোকের দল এখানে আরামে বসিয়া মন্ত্রিত্ব পদের জন্য ভোট-যুদ্ধের আয়োজন করিবে, কাল সেই ভোট-যুদ্ধে কে হারিবে কে জিতিবে সেই চিন্তায় মত্ত থাকিবে। ইহা কি এখন শোভা পায়? কিন্তু আজ আমি তোমাদের—বড় লোকদের—সাবধান করিয়া দিতেছি। এই রকম করিয়া তোমাদের গরীবদিগকে অত্যাচার করা বেশী দিন আর চলিবে না। বড় লোকদের গরীবের উপর নিষ্পেষণ, গরীবের মাথায় কাঁঠাল ভাঙ্গিয়া মোটর গাড়ী চড়া, ফ্যানের হাওয়া খাওয়া, সৌধ নির্ম্মাণ করা—গরীবের মাথায় কাঁঠাল ভাঙ্গিয়া নিজেদের আভিজাত্যের বড়াই করা—যদিও জগতের সৃষ্টি হইতেই চলিয়া আসিতেছে কিন্তু সে দিন এখন আর নাই। তোমাদের—বড় লোকদের—চক্ষু কি অন্ধ হইয়াছে? চক্ষে কি দেখিতেছ না—গরীবদের প্রতি অনুষ্ঠিত অত্যাচাররূপ মহাপাপের বিচারের দাবি আজ খোদাতালার দরবারে পেঁৗছিয়াছে। তাই তিনি আজ সংহার মূর্ত্তি ধরিয়াছেন। সমগ্র জগৎ জুড়িয়া তিনি আজ কি রকম সংহার চালাইতেছেন তাহা কি দেখিতেছ না? ইউরোপ আজ শ্মশানে পরিণত হইয়াছে, ইউরোপের সভ্য জাতিগণ একে অন্যের গলা কাটিয়া মারিতেছে, ইহাও কি দেখিতেছ না? মহাকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ গরীবের প্রতি তোমাদের বড় লোকদের

অত্যাচার দেখিয়া অতি দুঃখে বলিয়া গিয়াছেন "হে মোর দুর্ভাগা দেশ, যাদের করেছ অপমান, অপমানে হতে হবে তাহাদের সবার সমান।" মহাকবি যাহা বলিয়াছেন, তাহা অক্ষরে অক্ষরে সত্য হইয়াছে। ইহাতে কোনই সন্দেহ নাই। যার চক্ষু আছে, হৃদয় আছে, অনুভব করবার শক্তি আছে, সেই দেখিতেছে, আজ খোদার অভিসম্পাৎ সমগ্র জগৎময় ঘুরিয়া ঘুরিয়া আভিজাত্যকে ধ্বংস করিতেছে! তাই আমি বলিতেছি, বিলাসী বড় লোকের দলকে, এই এসেম্বলীর ভিতর বসিয়া গরীবদের ভাগ্য লইয়া ছিনিমিনি খেলা আর বেশী দিন চলিতে পারে না। আল্লাকে সাক্ষী করিয়া বলিয়া দিতেছি তোমাদের এই পাপ ছিনিমিনি খেলা বেশী দিন আর চলিবে না—আল্লা কঠোর হস্তে তোমাদের এই কুমতলব এবং পাপ ছিনিমিনি খেলা সমস্তই নিষ্পেষণ করিয়া দিবেন। তোমাদের এই সকল ছিনিমিনি খেলা দেখিয়া কাঁদিব কি হাসিব কিছুই ঠিক করিতে পারিতেছি না। (A Voice: হাসতে থাকুন।) সব কিছু লইয়াই ঠাট্টা। দেশের ভিতর কি প্রাণ নাই? প্রাণ কি শুকাইয়া গিয়াছে? (A member from the opposition benches: ভোলার গাঙের জল ঢালুন। Laughter from the Opposition benches.) সভামুখ্য মহোদয়, আপনার কাছে আমার একটা নিবেদন এই যে আপনি দেখিয়াছেন যে ওপারের লোকেরা যখন বক্তৃতা দেয় আমরা কেউ একটা কথা বলি না। (A Voice: নিশ্চয়ই বলেন, অনেক কিছু বলেন।) দেখিতেছেন ওপারের ঐ সব বেঞ্চের লোকেরা কিরূপ গোলমাল করিতেছেন। আপনি Speaker, আপনার dignityও ওঁরা রক্ষা করিতেছেন না। আমার এক একবার ইচ্ছা হয় ঐ বেঞ্চগুলিকে জ্বালাইয়া দিই। হাতুড়ি মারিয়া ভাঙ্গিয়া ফেলি। ঐ বেঞ্চগুলিরই একটা দোষ আছে।

Mr. SPEAKER : Order, order.

Maulvi MD. MOZAMMEL HUQ : আপনি order orderই বলুন আর যাই করুন ওঁরা থামিবেন না। ওঁরা সব আভিজাত্য সম্প্রদায়ের লোক, ওঁরা কেবল এই হাউসে বসিয়া গল্প করেন আর গোলমাল করিয়া আমাদের কাজের বাধা দেন। আপনি একটা ruling ভালো করিয়া দিবেন যদি একটা লোকেরও বক্তৃতার সময় কোন গোলমাল হয় তাহোলে ওঁদের বাহিরে যাইতে হইবে। (Laughter from all quarters.)

Mr. SPEAKER : Order, order.

Maulvi MD. MOZAMMEL HUQ : আল্লাই বিচার করিবেন। এই সব ছিনিমিনি খেলা, এইসব হাসিঠাট্টা বেশী দিন আর চলিবে না। আমার মনে হয়, আজ রাত্রেই বড়লোকদের বাড়ীগুলি সব জ্বলিয়া যায়, ওদের সব পোষাক-চোষাক, সোনাদানা, আসবাবপত্র, মটরগাড়ী সব ধ্বংস হইয়া যায় আর এই Assemblyটা ঠিকই থাকে এবং ওদের মেম্বরগিরীটাও ঠিক থাকে। আর আগামীকাল একেবারে গরীব হইয়া গিয়া ওঁরা সব বড়লোকের দল রাস্তায় বাহির হইয়া ক্ষুৎপিপাসাক্লিষ্ট হইয়া অনাহারে খালিপেটে হাটিয়া হাটিয়া এখানে আসিয়া ঐ বেঞ্চগুলিতে বসেন এবং উঠিয়া বক্তৃতা দেন, তাহা হইলে সে বক্তৃতার ধারা অন্য রকম হইয়া যাইবে এবং অনাহারের জ্বালা কি, উপবাসের কষ্ট কি, গরীবের দুঃখ কি, তখন উহারা বুঝিতে পারিবে। এবং আমার বিশ্বাস, এইটে অতি শীঘ্রই আসিতেছে। (A voice: আসুক না।) ও দলের বক্তাদের মধ্যে ময়মনসিংহের বোকানগরের মহাপণ্ডিত মৌলানা বোকানগরী সাহেব অন্নের জন্য হাহাকার করিয়া যে বক্তৃতা দিয়াছেন, তার মধ্যে খাঁটি কথা, গরীবের দুঃখের কথা খুঁজিয়া পাইলাম না। তিনি বলিয়াছেন যে সোনার থালায় ভাত, আর রূপার গেলাসে পানী খাওয়াইতে নাকি মন্ত্রীরা চাহিয়াছেন—আমরা তো এমন কথা মন্ত্রী

মহোদয়দের মুখে কখনো শুনি নাই, অথবা গভর্ণমেণ্টের কোন খাতাপত্রে বা কমিউনিকেও দেখি নাই। তিনি যে গল্প আমাদিগকে শুনাইয়াছেন, তাহা বোকানগরের পাঠশালার অপগণ্ড অজ্ঞ শিশুদেরই উপযুক্ত—বঙ্গীয় ব্যবস্থা পরিষদ, বাঙ্গলার পার্লিয়ামেণ্ট, এখানকার শিক্ষিত ও বিজ্ঞ সভ্যবৃন্দের নিকট ঐরূপ অবান্তর গল্প বলা একেবারেই অশোভনীয় হইয়াছে। তার পরে জামান সাহেবের বক্তৃতা—তিনি কাজের কথা কিছুই বলেন নাই কেবল হাতের মধ্যে হাঁড়ি ভাঙ্গিতে ভয় দেখাইয়া চিৎকার করিয়াছেন। এ হাঁড়িটা কার? (A voice: যাঁর তিনি ভালই জানেন।) এই রকম হাঁড়ি ভাঙ্গা ভাঙ্গি যদি চলে তবে আর National Government চাই চাই বলিয়া চিৎকার কেন? কাল ভোটেই দেখা যাবে। যদি National Government চাও, তবে সকলে এদিকে চলিয়া এসো। এখনি National Government হইয়া যাইবে। আমাদের দিক দিয়া কোনই চিন্তার কারণ নাই। (Mr. ABU HOSSAIN SARKER: আপনার মধ্যে চিন্তাই কিছু নাই তার আবার কারণ থাকবে কি?) Mr. Speaker মহোদয়, আপনি দয়া করিয়া উঁহাদের একটু চুপ করিতে বলুন। যাক, প্রথমবার Ministryতে সাড়ে চারি বৎসর থাকিবার পর যখন আমরা দেখিলাম যে এটার কাজতো দেখা গেল, আচ্ছা দেখা যাক এখন যাঁরা Patriotism, Patriotism বলিয়া চিৎকার করিয়া বেড়ায় তাহাদের একটু সুযোগ দেওয়া যাউক, এই কথা ভাবিয়া Patriotism-এর সবচেয়ে বেশী বড়াই করে যে কংগ্রেস দল তাদের একটু chance দিলাম, আসুক তারা সবাই এসে একটু কাজ করুক। দেখি ওরা দেশের কি কাজ করিতে পারে? গত মোলনি মাস ধরিয়া আমরা কি দেখিয়াছি? আমরা দেখিয়াছি, তাহাদের দ্বারা কাজ কিছুই হয় নাই। এ হাউসের সকলেই দেখিয়াছেন এতসব বড়াই—এত Patriotismএর বড়াই করিয়াও কাজ তাঁহারা কিছুই করিতে পারেন নাই; বরং অকাজ এবং কুকাজ তাঁহারা বিস্তর করিয়াছেন। এবং মুসলমানদের গলা কাটিয়াছেন। এবং সেই কুকাজের জন্যই চাউলের দাম কমিতেছে না। এই সঙ্গে আমি মহা মাননীয় ভূতপূর্ব্ব প্রধান-মন্ত্রী মৌলবী এ, কে, ফজলুল হক সাহেব সম্বন্ধে দুই একটি কথা বলিতে চাই। "গভর্ণর আমাকে এটা করিতে দেন নাই, ওটা করিতে দেন নাই, সেটা করিতে দেন নাই বলিয়া আমি কোন কাজ করিতে পারি নাই" এইরূপ অনেক অভিযোগ গভর্ণর বাহাদুরের বিরুদ্ধে তিনি করিয়াছেন। আমি তাঁহাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিতেছি, এখন একথা কেন? গভর্ণর যখন কাজ করিতে দেন নাই তখন ঐ issueর উপর পূর্ব্বে আপনি resign দিলেন না কেন? গভর্ণরের বাধাতে কাজ যখন করিতে পারেন নাই বলিতেছেন, তখন মন্ত্রিত্বের গদি ত্যাগ করেন নাই কেন? আত্মসম্মান হইতে মাসিক তিন হাজার টাকা কি এতই বড় জিনিষ ছিল? ঐ এক কথার উপর যদি পূর্ব্বে resign দিতেন, তাহা হইলে ভারতময় নাম হইত, ভারতের ideal বা আদর্শ হইতে পারিতেন, ভারত সচিবের দপ্তর কাঁপিয়া উঠিত এবং খুব সম্ভব ঐ issueর উপর Government of India Actএর সংশোধন হইয়া যাওয়ার পথ সুগম হইত। বিশ্বময় একটা নাম পড়িয়া যাইত। তাহা না করিয়া এখন এখানে যাইতেছেন, সেখানে যাইতেছেন, গভর্ণরকে গালি দিতেছেন, পার্কে পার্কে বক্তৃতা দিয়া পাকিস্তান ও লীগের নিন্দা করিয়া বেড়াইতেছেন, এবং ৩৩ পৃষ্ঠার বর্ণনা ছাপাইয়া পড়িতেছেন। এখন এ সকল করিয়া লাভ আছে কি? ইহা পূর্ব্বকৃত পুঞ্জীভূত পাপানুষ্ঠানেরই ফল। পাপে বাপকেও ছাড়ে না। ইহা খোদার মার। কথায় বলে খোদার মার দুনিয়ার বার। এখন কাঁদিয়া বা গভর্ণরকে গালি দিয়া লাভ আছে কি? এখন grapes are sour বলিয়া কোন ফল হইবে কি? এখন লজ্জায় অধোবদন হইয়া থাকা উচিত এবং নূতন মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীকে কিছুদিন কাজ করিতে দেওয়া উচিত।

নূতন মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর বয়স মাত্র ২ মাস ২০ দিন। এখনও তাহারা ওঁয়া ওঁয়া করিয়া কাঁদিতেছে। কাঁদিবে না? ওঁরা যে এখনও একেবারে শিশু। ওঁদেরকে এখনও ১৬ মাস দুধ কলা খাওয়াইয়া মোটা তাজা করিতে হইবে। তোমরা ১৬ মাস দুধ কলা খাইয়া মোটাতাজা হইয়া পাহালওয়ান হইয়া এপার হইতে ওপারে গিয়াছ। তোমরা এই ২ মাস ২০ দিনের শিশুর সঙ্গে এখনই যুদ্ধং দেহি বলিয়া আস্তিন গুটাইতেছ—ইহার সঙ্গে লড়াই করিতে চাহিতেছ। এই শিশুর সঙ্গে লড়াই করিতে তোমাদের পাহালওয়ানদের একটুও লজ্জা হয় না? ষোল মাস খাইয়া এদের মোটা তাজা হইতে দাও। তৎপর লড়াই করিতে আসিও। তখন দেখা যাবে কে হারে কে জিতে? (A voice from the opposition: এই বক্তৃতাটা কার কাছে শিখেছেন?) আমরা তোমাদের মত ও রকম বক্তৃতাবাজী করি না। আমরা দেশের সেবা করি। দুই মাস কুড়ি দিন মাত্র এখানে মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর সঙ্গে থাকিয়া তোমাদের অনুষ্ঠিত ১৬ মাসের কুকাজ দূর করিতে এখনো পারি নাই; তবে আশা আছে, কিছু দিন সময় পাইলে উহা দূর করিতে পারিব। এ দিকে নূতন মন্ত্রিগণকেও সতর্ক করিয়া দিতেছি, তাঁহাদের নিকটও আমরা কাজ চাই—কৃষক মজুর, গরীব-দুঃখী সর্ব্বহারাদের সর্ব্ববিধ মঙ্গল এই মন্ত্রিগণের নিকট আমরা চাই। ইহাদিগকেও, ১৬ মাস সময় দিব। দেখি, ইঁহারা কৃষক-প্রজার দুঃখ দূর করিতে পারেন কি না, তাহাদিগকে খাইতে দিতে পারেন কি না? যদি পারেন ভাল, নচেৎ ইহাদিগকেও ওপারে পাঠাইয়া দিব এবং নূতন মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল গঠন করিব। যাক্, এখন ভোলার শোচনীয় অবস্থার কথা একটু বলি। ভোলাতে আমি একদিন দুপুর বেলায় বাসায় বসিয়া আছি এমন সময় একটী লোক আসিয়া আমার কুম্পাউণ্ডের মধ্যে ধপাস করিয়া পড়িয়া গেল।

Mr. A. M. A. ZAMAN : Sir, on a point of information আমি জানতে চাই ওঁকে একটা controlএর shop দেওয়া হইয়াছে কিনা?

Mr. SPEAKER : Order, order.

Maulvi MD. MOZAMMEL HUQ : লোকটীকে পড়িয়া যাইতে দেখিয়া আমরা ছুটিয়া গেলাম। যেতেই লোকটী বলিল, একটু পানী খেতে দাও। পানী দেওয়া হইল। লোকটী পানী খাইয়া একটু ঠাণ্ডা হওয়ার পর বলিল, "আমাকে একটু দুধ দাও।" তাহাকে দুধ খাইতে দেওয়া হইল। দুধ খাওয়ার পর যখন সে অবসাদগ্রস্ত ও অচেতন হইয়া ঘণ্টা দুই পড়িয়া রহিল, তখন তাহাকে medical aid দেওয়ার জন্য ভোলার সরকারী হাসপাতালে পাঠাইয়া দেওয়া হইল। কিন্তু, সে পরের দিন হাসপাতালে মারা গিয়াছে। ডাক্তার বলিয়াছেন, অনাহারের দরুণই লোকটীর মৃত্যু হইয়াছে। বিশ্বাস না করেন, medical officerএর কাছে লিখিয়া report আনিয়া দেখাইতে পারি। এরূপ মৃত্যুর কারণ লোকে যথেষ্ট খাইতে পাইতেছে না। Control-এর দোকানে যাও, দেখিবে সেখানে বহু লোক জমা হইয়াছে, সেখানেও ভিড়ের মধ্যে একটা লোক পড়িয়া মারা গিয়াছে। ভোলায় বাজার করিতে আসিয়া দুইজন লোক মারা গিয়াছে বলিয়া শুনিয়াছি। Test relief কাজের বন্দোবস্ত করার জন্য দৌলত খাঁ গিয়াছিলাম, সেখানে জানিতে পারিলাম, খাইতে না পাইয়া দৌলত খাঁর আশে পাশে ১২টী লোক মারা গিয়াছে। ভোলায় প্রত্যহই লোক মারা যাওয়ার সংবাদ পাইতেছি। অন্যভাবে ভোলায় লোকের যে কি শোচনীয় অবস্থা হইয়াছে, উপরের উদাহরণ হইতেই আপনারা বুঝিতে পারিবেন। ভোলায় অগৌণে সাহায্য পাঠান দরকার। ভোলায় লোকের এই রকম দুরবস্থা দেখিয়া Test reliefএর জন্য

৫০ হাজার টাকা সদাশয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট দিয়াছেন। লোকেরা আসে—আসিয়া বলে—"না খাইয়া না খাইয়া মরিতেছি—reliefএর কাজ করিবার মত গায়ে বল নাই, আগে খাওয়াইয়া বাঁচান তারপর কাজ করিব।" আমি বিশ্বাস করি, ভোলার মতন অবস্থা বাংলাদেশের বহু জায়গায়ই হইয়াছে, ইহাতে কোন সন্দেহ নাই। সেইজন্য আমাদের মাননীয় খাদ্য-সচিব মহোদয় Food driveএর ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছেন। বাংলাদেশে কত চাউল আছে বা না আছে তাহা না জানিয়া বাংলার জন্য কত চাউল লাগিবে, কিরূপে তাহার ব্যবস্থা করা চলে? (A member from the opposition bench হাওড়া আর কলিকাতা বাদ পড়েছে কেন?) কলিকাতায় এবং হাওড়ায়ও food drive আসিতেছে, তার জন্য চিন্তা করিবেন না। যাহা হউক, এই food driveএ দেখিতে পাওয়া গেল যে বাংলায় চাউলের deficit আছে। কিন্তু certain data তো পাওয়া গেছে, বাংলাদেশে কত চাউল আছে, আর কত চাউল লাগিবে, তা বোঝা গেল। আমাদের মাননীয় Food Minister মহোদয়কে আমরা বলিয়াছি তিনি বৃটিশ গভর্ণমেণ্টের কাছ হইতেই আনুন, অথবা India Governmentএর কাছ হইতেই আনুন বা অন্য দেশ হইতেই খাদ্য আনুন, বাংলাদেশকে খাইতে দিতে হইবে। যদি তিনি দেখেন যে বাংলাদেশে বাস্তবিকই চাউল নাই এবং লোক না খাইয়া মরিতেছে তখন এই প্রদেশকে Famine area declare করিতে হইবেই। কিন্তু সে কখন? যখন তিনি দেখিবেন যে আর Famine declare না করিলে চলিতেছে না। (Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: যখন সব লোক মরে যাবে তখন?) (Noise and interruptions) Sir, এইসব গোলমালেইতো মূল্যবান সময় চলিয়া যাইতেছে। যাক। এই food driveএর ব্যবস্থা করিয়া এখন কিছু চাউলের সংস্থান হইয়াছে। সে চাউলের দ্বারা অনেক জায়গায় সাহায্য করা হইতেছে। তাছাড়া Test relief আছে। তাতে হাজার হাজার লোক কাজ করিতেছে। ভোলার জন্য সদাশয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট ৫০ হাজার টাকা দিয়াছেন, আরো ৫০ হাজার টাকা মঞ্জুর হইয়াছে। মাননীয় খাদ্য-সচিবকে আমি ভোলার অন্নাভাবের ও দুরবস্থার কথা জানাইয়াছি। তিনি ৫ হাজার মণ চাউল কলিকাতা হইতে ভোলায় পাঠাইয়া দিয়াছেন এবং আরও ৫ হাজার মণ দশ দিনের মধ্যে কলিকাতা হইতে ভোলায় পাঠাইয়া দিবেন বলিয়া আমার নিকট প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়াছেন। বর্তমানে দশ হাজার মণ চাউলের দাম তিন লক্ষ টাকা। এখন আপনারা বুঝিয়া দেখুন গভর্ণমেণ্ট কত খরচ করিতেছেন। আমাদের মহামান্যা মিসেস সেনগুপ্তা চট্টগ্রামের করুন কাহিনী বর্ণনা করিয়াছেন। তাহাতে আমরা চট্টগ্রামের অবস্থা জানিতে পারিয়াছি। (At this stage red light was lit.) কিন্তু, Sir, লালবাতি কেন? দয়া করিয়া আমাকে আর ৫ মিনিট সময় দিন। Sir, আমি আপনার নিকট সময় চাই (laughter) এই জন্য যে আমি অন্য কথা না বলিয়া কেবল দেশের দুর্দশার কথা এবং সর্বহারাদের দুঃখের কথাই বলিব। মিসেস সেন গুপ্তা মহাশয়া চট্টগ্রামে গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে এত সাহায্য দিয়াছেন তাহার উল্লেখ করেন নাই। তাঁহার অবগতির জন্য বলিতেছি—চট্টগ্রামে গভর্ণমেণ্ট ১ লক্ষ টাকা কৃষি-ঋণ এবং ৪৫ হাজার টাকা খয়রাতী দান পাঠাইয়াছেন। তদুপরি অসহায় গরীবদের বিনামূল্যে খাওয়ার জন্য সেখানে ১৫০টি free kitchen বা সরকারী লঙ্গরখানা খুলিয়া দেওয়া হইয়াছে। কেবল চট্টগ্রামেই নয়, আমি আশা করি, বাংলার পল্লীতে পল্লীতে যেখানেই খাবার অভাব হইয়াছে, সেখানেই free kitchen খোলা হইবে। বর্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে লোকের দুরবস্থা দূর করার জন্য চেষ্টা করিতেছেন ইহা খাঁটি সত্য কথা—ইহাতে কোন সন্দেহ নাই। কিন্তু এ সকল ব্যবস্থা করার জন্য একটু সময় দিতে হইবে—আমাদের মহামান্য খাদ্য-সচিব মহোদয়কে একটু সময় দিতে হইবে। এই অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে তিনি যাহা করিয়াছেন, তজ্জন্য তাঁহাকে ধন্যবাদ দেওয়া উচিত। তাহা না করিয়া এ সময় তাঁহাকে heckle বা অপদস্থ করিবার আশা করিয়া চলা উচিত কি? Sir আমি আর কি বলিব? দেশের এই বক্তব্য দরদিন

গভর্ণমেণ্টের কার্য্যে সাহায্য না করিয়া বাধা দিতে যাওয়ায় ওদের লজ্জা হওয়া উচিত। বিরুদ্ধ দলের অভিজাত সম্প্রদায়কে বলি, দেশের এই দুর্দ্দিনে রাজনৈতিক দলাদলি ছাড়িয়া আসুন আমরা সকলে এক হইয়া দেশের কাজে অগ্রসর হই।

Mr. PRAMATHA NATH BANERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I come today to bury Cæsar and not to praise him. Bengal today is under the grip of the biggest famine in the course of its chequered history. Pestilence is waiting round the corner. The Floud Commission Report in the course of its historical survey recorded that between 1675 and 1936 the highest price of paddy recorded in Bengal was in 1929—the price of rice stood at Rs. 4-14 per maund. 1929, you will remember, is the year of acute economic crisis within the British Empire. Madras recorded its highest price for paddy at Rs. 5-14 per maund in 1919. The price in the United Provinces in 1920 was the same. Bombay price in 1919 was Rs. 5-12. The years 1919 and 1920 are years when dovelike peace returned to India's shores after World War No. 1.

When the Ministry that has gone by was severely heckled before the House in March last for its alleged inability to solve the food problem of Bengal, the average price of the medium rice stood in January, 1943, at Rs. 10-12 per maund and the average price of coarse rice was Rs. 8-10 per maund. In February, 1943, the price stood at Rs. 12-15 and Rs. 10-13 per maund respectively. In March, 1943, the past Ministry stood dissolved after it had fought down three Censure Motions on the food question. The average price of medium rice then ranged between Rs. 18 and Rs. 20 per maund and the average price of coarse rice varied between Rs. 16 and Rs. 18 per maund. In April, 1943, when Bengal was enjoying the caresses of rule under section 93 the price of medium rice and the price of coarse rice rose to Rs. 24 and Rs. 22 respectively. On the 24th of April, 1943, the present Ministry came to power. In May, 1943, the average price of medium rice ranged between Rs. 30 and Rs. 32 per maund and the average price of coarse rice rose to Rs. 28 to Rs. 30 per maund. Yet we find in the speech of Mr. Suhrawardy that with the abolition of the zonal barriers in the eastern region and the system of permits—I am quoting his words—"There was a definite arrest in the price of rice. Along with it the enunciation of a clear-cut policy directed against hoarding and black-marketing prevented further speculation in prices." A little self-introspection on the part of my honourable friend might have avoided a confusion between the past and the present with the future. The prices are still soaring rocket high. The following figures between the third week of May and the second week of July with regard to the price of rice in Calcutta I present to him for further study:—

May 1943.

	1st week.		2nd week.		3rd week.		4th week.	
	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.
Patnai					30	0	33	0
Kalma					29	4	32	8
Bolepur					28	0	32	6
Coarse					28	8	31	8

June 1943.

	1st week.		2nd week.		3rd week.		4th week.	
	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a.	Rs.	a
Patnai	33	5	32	0	..		32	0
Kalma	32	13	31	8	..		31	8
Bolepur	32	8	29	4	..		31	0
Coarse	31	8	30	0	..		30	4

July 1943.

	Rs.	a.
Patnai	32	0
Kalma	31	12
Coarse	30	0

I shall not imitate the inimitable methods of my honourable friend with regard to his own statement on the food situation. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Silly.) My honourable friend calls "silly". His methods are inimitable. When Mr. Suhrawardy in course of the debate in the Budget Session in March, 1943, described the Budget Statement of Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the then Finance Minister, as a mere scrap of paper, I looked in vain through the statement of the present Minister of Civil Supplies to find out the policy behind the scheme. In March last I heard the booming of guns from the European benches when they demanded whether the policy of Ministry that was to go was the policy of control or was it the policy of decontrol. I ask the present Ministry today, is it the policy of control with what they allege with thirty thousand paid squad masters and one and a half million members of the Food Committee throughout Bengal? Is it the policy of control? Is the policy one of decontrol? Does this Ministry follow the basic plan enunciated by the Government of India? With the sympathetic concurrence of the provinces and the States in the Eastern Region Mr. Suhrawardy tells us in his optimistic language, "stocks are beginning to follow. The trickle from the neighbouring provinces has started and our supplies are being slowly but surely augmented." As yet the level of prices does not betray any evidence of augmentation. I should have imagined that the statement of the present Minister of Civil Supplies who was the past Minister of Finance in this province would be replete with concrete details. Figures dance before his eyes. Mr. Suhrawardy has not given us any balance sheet of the food position of the province. He is not sure whether there has been shortage of rice in the province. He who pretended to understand the psychology of the masses better than anybody else on the 26th March, 1943, is apologetic today. He says, "It appears to me that insistence on shortage would increase panic and stimulate hoarding and thereby aggravate the general food scarcity and push up the prices." He is very well satisfied with the results of the food drive. I like the expression "drive". The race of slave-drivers does not seem to be extinct. In his statement without giving figures Mr. Suhrawardy is supposed to have dehoarded stocks in the region of seven to eight million maunds—he did not tell us whether of rice or paddy. Last night he made a statement on the floor of the House that his comprehensive census betrayed deficits in almost every district in Bengal. Shall I attempt to account for the figure—seven to eight million maunds with reference to Major-General Wood's figures? The current year's production he estimated at six million nine hundred and

sixteen thousand tons. The carry-over from the last year he estimated at one million tons. The Central Government's proposed supply to Bengal is to the extent of five hundred and fifty thousand tons. The grand total therefore is eight million four hundred and sixty-six thousand tons. The average annual production from 1936 to 1941 is eight million one hundred and eighty-one thousand tons. So according to these figures there is a surplus of two hundred and eighty-five thousand tons. It is significant that Mr. Suhrawardy's debourded figure of seven to eight million maunds approximates the carry-over figure of Major-General Wood.

Mr. Suhrawardy has not calculated the requirements of the year within the province. If we assume that the rice-eating population of Bengal at 48 million souls, and if we assume further that the *per capita* consumption of 11 chattaks per day, then in accordance with the forecast of 1942-43 there will be a deficit of 6·9 million maunds. I may hardly point out that the Jail Code assumes a consumption of rice of 7 maunds per head per annum. The figure given by the Land Revenue Commission is 9 maunds per head per annum. The figures for consumption adopted by the present Ministry regarding the requirements of families with stocks are 14 seers per month for males and 12 seers per month for females and 10 seers per month below the age of 14 years and above the age of 4 years. Children below the age of 4 years have no requirements. They do not eat yet they live. They have certainly not votes.

I do not grudge for a moment the self-complacency of the Minister. On the 2nd June, 1943, a Press-note of the Ministry of the Civil Supplies spoke as follows: "There is every reason to believe that prices have reached their peak. With the establishment of free trade in Eastern Zone and the steps that are being taken to tighten up the administration of the Food Grains Control Order and to unearth hoards, there is ground for solid confidence that prices will begin to fall."

On the 3rd June, 1943, there was a discussion between the Premier of Assam and the Premier of Bengal. I shall be glad to hear the results of the discussion. On the same day the Orissa States imposed export duty of Rs. 4 to Rs. 10 per maund. On the 8th June, 1943, Mr. Suhrawardy made the following statement to the public: "My visits to Bihar and Orissa have yielded satisfactory results and we have been able to appreciate each other's point of view and difficulties. Both provinces have agreed not to requisition stocks in future or to interfere with the movement of food-grains in any way. They have also agreed to look into the previous cases of requisition of stocks which were meant for Bengal. The food-supply officers of both the Governments have agreed to examine each case and merchants who have any complaint to make regarding the various orders of requisition or freezing should apply to them as early as possible. Both the Governments have also instructed their various officers not to requisition any further traders' stock. Traders and merchants therefore can continue to purchase stocks in these zones and move them into Bengal without hindrance. The Assam Government have similarly opened their doors to free trade. *It is hoped that all these will result in rice flowing into Bengal from all directions and bring prices down all round in Bengal, but in other provinces as well.*"

His promises have not come true. Bengal has not yet acquired any advantage. The other provinces within the Eastern Zones have merely been dragged up to Bengal's price level. It is the good tale of Icarus of old. I wonder if the Bay of Bengal will be christened by the present Ministry the Icarean Sea. I now come to the measures adopted by the present Ministry for the solution of the food problem. The abolition of zonal barriers is not the policy of the present Ministry. They are claiming credit for Government of India policy. The food-grains control order has indeed been tightened, but the policy of allowing big industrial concerns of Calcutta as also Government agents to purchase rice unfettered from within the province or from outside the province included within the Eastern Zone at any price is a policy not of free trade. The ordinary civilian producers and ordinary civilian consumers are both placed in a position of great disadvantage. This policy reminds me of the doctrine of freedom of contract illustrated by Dickens with his immortal wit—the contract between an elephant and chicken for the purpose of dancing. Free trade within the province and the right to purchase unfettered without fixation of price are inconsistent, illogical and uneconomic propositions. I should like to know from the Minister (1) whether the Ministry has made up its mind to stop export from the province; (2) whether the Ministry has secured adequate transport facilities from the centre. If so to what extent? (3) Whether the Ministry has been able with the concurrence of the military authorities to release sufficient inland transport for inter-district traffic; (4) whether the Ministry has been able to secure adequate quantities of rice and other food-grains from outside the province—I do not want to know the figures at the operational stage. I should like to visualize Mr. Suhrawardy's "trickle". (5) I should like to know the quantity of *boro* crop—it has been harvested, and also the forecast of the *aus* crop. (6) I should like to know to what extent black-market has been penalised. I should like to know if influential profiteers and hoarders have been brought to book. (7) I should like to know if Mr. Suhrawardy's oath of honesty has been administered to the hierarchy of officials in the Supply Department, against whom allegations are rampant. (8) I should like to know why Calcutta and greater Calcutta have been excluded from the anti-hoard drive. Is it because this is where we live and earn? Is it because the trade-barons of Calcutta have all adopted philanthropic mission of Messrs. M. A. Ispahani? (9) I should like to know the amount spent by the Ministry on the agricultural loans between the 1st April, 1943, and today. I should like to know the amount actually spent on test relief works on these dates. (10) I should like to know the amount spent on gratuitous relief. (11) I should like to know if the Ministry has succeeded in obtaining the transport facilities for the purpose of bringing wheat and other food-grains from across the seas. What are the terms of Mr. Suhrawardy's appeal to the United Nations?

In my opinion famine and pestilence can never be solved by large promises and smooth excuses. Nor can they be solved by a far-off White Hall Moghul who on June 3rd, 1943, is reported to have stated as follows: "The rice situation causes anxiety and must continue to do so as long as the Burma crop is lost to us. The chief concern at present is for Bengal and specially

Calcutta where the price of rice is over eight times pre-war." His premise were wrong, his theories are wrong, his expectations have not yet come true The establishment of a National Government in India, to my mind, is the only solution. The "Grow More Food Campaign" will hardly solve our sufferings. From 1891 to 1941, i.e., in the course of fifty years, Bengal's population according to census figures has doubled from thirty-one million souls to sixty-one million souls. The net area which was sown in Bengal with food crop between 1940-41 is 24·7 million *aus*. The area under rice is 20·7 million acres. The area sown with more than one crop is 5·3 million acres. The total cultivable waste according to the Land Revenue Commission's Report is 3,725 thousand acres. The lawns of the Government House may be bristling with vegetables; they may bring relief to Mr. Suhrawardy. The vegetables will surely not be available to the people of Bengal. We are frequently told in this House that the Bengal Parliament is the daughter of the Parliament in West Minster. Is it a step-daughter? The index of retail food prices published by the Ministry of Labour tells us that in England between 1st September, 1939, to 1st September, 1942, the retail food prices have risen only by 17 per cent. and here the cost of living index published by the Regional Controller of Supplies, dated the 11th May, 1943, is —286. Who will tell us that India is not enjoying peace, who will not tell us that Bengal's heart beats with the heart of Minister Suhrawardy?

Maulvi IDRIS AHMED MIA: মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আজ ব্যক্তিগত বা দলগত ঝগড়া করবার সময় নয়। আমি ধরে নিলাম মাননীয় খাদ্য-মন্ত্রীমহোদয় খুব ভাল উদ্দেশ্যে তাঁদের কার্য্য আরম্ভ করেছিলেন; কিন্তু তাঁরা এত বড় একটা ভুল করেছেন যার জন্য আজ বাংলার বহু লোকের না খেতে পেয়ে মৃত্যু হচ্ছে এবং হবে। (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: কি ভুলটা করেছেন?) ভুলটা হ'ল এই, কলিকাতা এবং হাওড়া অঞ্চলে food drive স্থগিত রাখা। কলিকাতা এবং হাওড়া বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে দুটি প্রধানতম সহর, সেখানে food control বা food drive করবার জন্য যথেষ্ট লোক পাওয়া যেত না, এটা আমরা বিশ্বাস করি না। মফঃস্বলের, সহরের এবং গ্রামের দোকান এবং প্রত্যেক লোকের বাড়ী ঢুকে তাদের শোবার ঘরের তক্তপোষের নীচে পর্য্যন্ত খুঁজে দেখবার লোক পাওয়া গেল আর কলিকাতা এবং হাওড়ার driveএর জন্য লোক জুটত না, একথা ঠিক নহে। কলিকাতা, হাওড়া বাদ দেওয়ায় মফঃস্বলের অনেক খাদ্য এখানে এসে জমা হয়েছে। বস্তুতঃ কলিকাতা ও হাওড়ার জন্য যদি প্রধানতঃ এইটা লক্ষ্য রাখা হতো যে ট্রামে কারে, ট্রেণে বা নৌকাযোগে কি পরিমাণ খাদ্যশস্য, এই বাংলাদেশের মফঃস্বল হইতে কলিকাতা, হাওড়ায়, কোথায় কোন ঘাটে বা কোন গুদামে জমা হচ্ছে, তাহ'লে হয়তো এ বিষয়টার খানিকটা check হতে পারতো; এবং তাহ'লে দেখতে পেতেন মফঃস্বলে ও কলিকাতায় কত চাল মজুত আছে। কিন্তু, এটা না করায় শুধু যে কলিকাতা, হাওড়ায় অধিক ধান চাউল এসেছে, তাই নয়, অনেক সময় দেখা গিয়াছে যে চাল-ধান এখানে এসেও আবার বাংলার বাহিরে অন্যের হাতে গিয়ে পড়েছে। এখানে খাদ্য-অভিযানের কুফলের একটা example দিচ্ছি। আমার এলাকা রহনপুর একটা বড় হাট, সেখানে ১৫।১৬৲ টাকা করে ধানের দর ছিল। যখন সেখানে food drive movement আরম্ভ হ'ল তখন সেই ধান ১৬৲ টাকা দর থেকে ১২৲ টাকায় এবং পরে ৮৲ টাকায় নেমে গেলো। আমি গভর্ণমেণ্টকে challenge

দিচ্ছি। ধানের দর ১৬৲ টাকা থেকে ১২৲ টাকা, ৮৲ টাকা হ'ল, তার কারণ, যার ঘরে যত ধান মজুত ছিল, তার মনে একটা আতঙ্ক জন্মালো যে হয়তো গভর্ণমেণ্ট তার সব মজুত ধান নিয়ে নেবেন, তার চেয়ে যত শীঘ্র পারি বেচে ফেলা যাক। আমি জানি রহনপুরের আড়ৎদারের গৃহে এখনও কম দরে হাজার হাজার মণ ধান বেচার হিসাব মজুত আছে। আমি challenge করছি যে এটা যদি আমি প্রমাণ করতে না পারি তাহলে আমি, আমার member-এর পদ পরিত্যাগ করবো, আর যদি প্রমাণ করতে পারি তাহ'লে তিনি মন্ত্রিত্ব ছাড়বেন। (A member from the Government bench: Challenge accepted.) বেশ, আমার কথা ঠিক নয় তা প্রমাণের ভার আপনাদের উপর থাকল। তারপর এই যে খাদ্য-অভিযান তিনি আরম্ভ করলেন এতে বাংলাদেশের সকল শ্রেণীর লোকের মনেই প্রথম থেকে একটা আতঙ্কের সঞ্চার হ'লো। শিক্ষিত ভাল লোক, এমন কি Pleaderএর মত যারা সব উচ্চ শিক্ষিত লোক, তাঁরা পর্য্যন্ত বুঝতে পারেন নি যে বাস্তবিক এই খাদ্য-অভিযানে কি হবে, এবং ধান-চাল কি করা যাবে। এবং এর ফলে এই হলো যে, যার যতটুকু সঞ্চিত শস্য ছিল সব কম দামে বিক্রয় করে দিতে লাগলো। ষোল টাকার ধান ৮৲ টাকা পর্য্যন্ত নেমে আসায়, গভর্ণমেণ্টের এজেণ্ট (যারা মুনাফা খেয়ে থাকে) তাদের খুব সুবিধা হ'ল, আর দেশের ধান-চাউল কলিকাতা, হাওড়ায় জমা হয়ে গ্রামের লোকের দুরবস্থা চরমে উঠলো। এটা মিথ্যা কথা নয়। সেখানে বহু লোক আজ না খেতে পেয়ে মারা যাচ্ছে। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যদি বলেন মারা যায় নি, তা'হলে আমি সেটা প্রমাণ করে দিতে রাজি আছি।

মাননীয় মন্ত্রীমহোদয় খুব বড় গলায় বলছেন যে, food সম্বন্ধে তাঁরা যে village food committee গঠন করেছেন তাতে নাকি irrigation, drainage, adult education, sanitation, census প্রভৃতি কাজ হবে। গ্রামে গ্রামে যে ইউনিয়ন ফুড কমিটি হয়েছে খালি জন দশ-বারো লোকের নাম তাতে লিখে রাখা হয়েছে। তাদের উপর কি এমন শক্তি দেওয়া হইয়াছে যে দেশের সব কাজই তাদের দ্বারা হবে। তিনি যে সমস্ত কথা বলেছেন—সেগুলি ছেলে-মানুষের উক্তি ছাড়া আর কিছুই নয়; এবং এর পূর্ব্বে কোন মাননীয় মন্ত্রিমহোদয় এরূপ উক্তি করতে সাহস করেন নাই। এই ইংরাজী আমলাতন্ত্রের রাজত্বে কয়েকটা village committeeর কি ক্ষমতা আছে, তা আমি জানি না। স্বয়ং মন্ত্রিমহোদয়দের ও আইন সভার member দের নিয়ে যে সব committee হয় তারই বা কি বিশেষ ক্ষমতা থাকে? আমলাতন্ত্রের সহায়তা নিয়ে তাঁরা কাগজে টিকে থাকেন মাত্র। সুতরাং এই রকম বাজে কথা বলার যে কোন প্রয়োজন আছে আমি তা মনে করি না। যাই হোক আর একটা কথা হচ্ছে যে "Grow more food" এই দিকে যে লোককে এগিয়ে যেতে বলছেন, তা কেমন করে সম্ভব? গ্রামের চাষী লোকের অবস্থা এমন হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে যে তাদের চাষের বলদ-গরুগুলো পর্য্যন্ত বিক্রি করে ফেলতে হচ্ছে। দেশে ভাল বলদ-গরু কি আছে, সব পেটের দায়ে বিক্রি হয়ে যাচ্ছে। গ্রামের বড় বড় হাটে যান, সেখানে দেখবেন দিনের পর দিন সেগুলি বিক্রি হয়ে যাচ্ছে। তারপর গভর্ণমেণ্টের বীজের ভাগ বিলির কথা তো ছেড়েই দিন। বীজ দরকার আষাঢ় মাসে, প্রভুদের বীজ যাবে শ্রাবণ মাসের শেষের দিকে, কারণ স্বয়ং খোদা-তালার বৃষ্টি, বন্যার দিকেও এঁরা নজর রাখেন না। তারপর মন্ত্রী হউন, আর লাট-সাহেবই হউন, সেখানকার Magistrate বাহাদুর যতক্ষণ পর্য্যন্ত না হুকুম দেবেন যে, এই জেলায় বীজ বিতরণ করা হউক, ততদিন পর্য্যন্ত সেই জেলায় বীজ বিতরণ হতে পারে না; এই হ'ল আমাদের

গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিয়ম। Russiaর মত তো আর কৃষকের গভর্ণমেণ্ট এখানে নয়; আমাদের হচ্ছে Bureaucratic গভর্ণমেণ্ট; যাঁরা এতো সুবিধা পেয়েও কাজে বিশেষ কিছু সুবিধা করতে পারছেন না। (Here red light was put lit.)

Mr. SPEAKER : Your time is up.

Mr. RASIKLAL BISWAS : আর কতক্ষণ বলবেন?

Maulvi IDRIS AHMED MIA : কেন, যে সব খারাপ কাজ করেছেন তা বুঝি শুনতে ভাল লাগছে না? আমার আর একটা কথা বলবার আছে, সেটা হচ্ছে যে মাননীয় মন্ত্রিমহোদয়রা খাদ্য-অভিযান করবার আগে যদি আমাদের পরিষদের অধিবেশন করতেন অথবা সব দলের লোককে ডাকতেন এবং যুক্তি, পরামর্শ করে কি ভাবে কার্য্য করতে হবে, সেটা ঠিক করতেন, তাহ'লে বোধ হয় বাংলার অবস্থা এইরূপ চরমে উঠতো না। কিন্তু, তাঁরা এ সম্বন্ধে আমাদের বা অপরের সঙ্গে কোনরূপ আলোচনা বা পরামর্শ করেন নাই। ফলে যা হবার তা হয়েছে। দেশে দুর্ভিক্ষ উপস্থিত। আর একটা কথা, মন্ত্রির ভাঙ্গা-গড়ার জন্য টাকার তাঁরা ছিনিমিনিই খেলুন, আর যাই খুসী করুন, তাতে আমার কিছু করবার নেই। কিন্তু, আমি একথা জোরের সঙ্গে নিশ্চয়ই বলবো যে, যদি সমস্ত দলের লোক একত্রিত হয়ে এবং সমবেতভাবে চেষ্টা করতেন যাতে এই দুর্ভিক্ষের সময় বাংলাদেশের লোকে দু-মুঠো খেতে পেয়ে বাঁচতে পারে, তাহ'লে, বোধ হয় সত্যকারের কিছু কাজ হতো। আমরা জানি বহু মিলে এবং আড়ৎদারদের কাছে ও অন্যত্র বহু ধান-চাউল মজুত রয়েছে, গভর্ণমেণ্টের Famine fundএ ২০ লক্ষ টাকাও রয়েছে কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্ট এই fund দ্বারা কখন কি কাজ করবেন আমি তা বুঝতে পারি না। বাংলাদেশের দুর্ভিক্ষের দিকে চেয়েও কোন চেষ্টা এঁরা করছেন না। অথচ এর চেয়ে আর কি দুর্ভিক্ষ হবে? এ সময় যদি এই fund কাজে লাগানো না হয়, তাহ'লে আর কবে হবে? যদি আজ বাংলাদেশকে famine area বলে declare করা হতো, তাহ'লে আমরা দেশবাসীকে অনাহারে মৃত্যুর হাত হতে রক্ষা করতে পারতাম। আমার শেষ অনুরোধ, হাউসের সকল মেম্বারের নিকট যে একবার তাঁরা তাঁদের ব্যক্তিগত, দলগত ঝগড়া, বৈষম্য ভুলে গিয়ে দেশের গরীব ও চাষী ও জনসাধারণকে মৃত্যুর কবল হতে বাঁচাবার চেষ্টা করুন।

Srijut ASHUTOSH MULLICK: Mr. Speaker, Sir, বাংলা সরকারের খাদ্য-সচিব মহাশয় তাঁর শ্বেতপত্রে খবর জানিয়েছেন,—তাঁর হেফাজতে বঙ্গবাসীরা জাতি, বর্ণ, ধর্ম্ম ও সম্প্রদায় নির্ব্বিশেষে বেশ কুশলে আছে,—অভাব কেবল অন্নবস্ত্রের। সেই জন্য বাংলার খাদ্য-সমস্যার বর্ত্তমান পরিস্থিতির আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে আমি কিছু বলার প্রয়োজন মনে করি। মাছের পাখনা তার অঙ্গপ্রত্যঙ্গের মধ্যে ক্ষুদ্রতম, মৎস্যভোজীর কাছে উহা অকিঞ্চিৎকর কিন্তু ঐ পাখনার দ্বারাই সে দক্ষিণে, বামে, সম্মুখে, পশ্চাতে চলাফেরা করে বলিয়া উহাকে উপেক্ষা করা মাছের চলে না। সেইরূপ এই পরিষদের কোনো প্রতিনিধি বিশেষের মতামতকে উপেক্ষা কোরে বাংলার খাদ্য-সমস্যার সমাধান হবে না। খাদ্য-সমস্যার অকূল পাথারে সারা বাংলাদেশ যখন ভাসছে সুবৃহৎ হ্রদ, স্বচ্ছ সরোবর, পানা পুষ্করিণী এমন কি ক্ষুদ্র পাতকুয়া পর্য্যন্ত সব একাকার হোয়ে গেছে,—একেকে অন্যের সহিত পৃথক করা যায় না, স্বজাতীয় ভেদ, বিজাতীয় ভেদ, স্বগত ভেদ প্রভৃতি সকল প্রকারের ভেদাভেদ ভুলে, পরস্পরের প্রতি হিংসাদ্বেষ ত্যাগ কোরে একই নৌকায় পার হবার দরুণ পারের কড়ি

সংগ্রহ কোরতে হবে। "নান্য পন্থা বিদ্যতে অয়নায়।" কিন্তু পারের কড়ি সংগ্রহ করা গেলেও বর্ত্তমান পারের কাণ্ডারীর ফুটো নৌকায় উঠতে ভরসা হয় না,—যেহেতু তাতে নৌকা-ডুবির যথেষ্ট ভয় আছে। একতার অব্যবস্থিত-চিত্ত কর্ণধারের আপাত কর্ত্তব্যের উপরেও আস্থা রাখা চলে না। কি জানি কখন তিনি হাল ছেড়ে বোসবেন!!

একে খাদ্য-সমস্যাই বাংলার আসল সমস্যা, তার সঙ্গে এসে বিশ্বব্যাপী মহাসমরের জটিল সমস্যা বাংলাদেশকে যেন আজ পেয়ে বোসেছে,—একে বাপ তায় বয়সে বড়।—ফলে বাঙালীর দুঃখের মাত্রা দশমিকের উপর পৌনঃপুনিকের মত বেড়েই চোলেছে। এই খাদ্য-সমস্যাকে নিখিল ভারতীয় সমস্যা হিসেবে বিচার কোরে সেইভাবে তার প্রতিকারের প্রয়াস আরো পূর্ব্ব হোতে করা উচিত ছিল। অথচ বাংলা সরকারের মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর কাছে;—"ক্ষুন্নিবৃত্তি হোলে যে জ্বালা দূর হয়, কিংবা অভাব মোচনের ফলে যে দুঃখ দূর হয়, উহা সে জ্বালা বা দুঃখ নয়। টার্পিন তৈল মালিশ করলে যে জ্বালা সারে সে শ্রেণীর ব্যাধাও নয়,—উহা "গরীবের ছেলের ঘোড়া রোগ।" এই প্রকার উঁচু দরের দুঃখ সর্ব্বপ্রকার সর্ব্বনাশের কারণ ও সর্ব্বপ্রকার সর্ব্ব-নাশের মূল। অল্পসম্বল ব্যক্তি যদি এক দিনের জন্য রাজা হবার সখ্ মেটাতে চায় তবে দশ দিনে সে যেমন দেউলে কোরে দেয়, ঠিক সেই রকমটী হোয়েছে—খাদ্য-সমস্যা প্রতিকার-কল্পে বাংলা সরকারের মজুদবিরোধী আন্দোলনের ফল। বাংলায় খাদ্যই নেই অথচ সেখানে চোলেছে মজুদ-বিরোধী আন্দোলন! "এঁড়ে গোরু না চেনে দো" তর্কস্থলে অবশ্য বলা যেতে পারে—সঞ্চয়-তৃষ্ণার বিরুদ্ধে অভিযান বাংলাদেশের তথা ভারতবর্ষের পক্ষে একটা কিছু নতুন জিনিষ নয়। এক দিনের প্রয়োজনের অতিরিক্ত যিনি সঞ্চয় করেন না আমাদের প্রাচীন সংহিতাকারেরা সেই দ্বিজ গৃহীকেই প্রশংসা কোরেছেন, এবং একথাও কতকটা সত্য যে আমাদের সঞ্চয় প্রয়োজনকেই ছাড়িয়ে চোলে যায় এবং প্রয়োজনকেই বঞ্চিত ও পীড়িত কোরতে থাকে। কিন্তু যে নীতির অবলম্বনে গত জুন মাসে বাংলা সরকারের চতুর্দ্দশাহব্যাপী সঞ্চয়-বিরোধী বিরাট উৎসব চোলেছে তাতে যোগদান কোরতে গিয়ে বাংলার পল্লীবাসীকে একেবারে ফতুর হোতে হোয়েছে। যোগেশ্বর মন্ত্রীপ্রবরের কালভৈরব সদৃশ সরকারী কর্ম্মচারিগণ বাংলার পল্লীতে পল্লীতে সঞ্চয়-বিরোধী উৎসবের অব্যবহিত পূর্ব্বেই যে যে বিভীষিকা সৃষ্টি কোরেছিলেন তাতে কোরে পল্লীর অধিবাসীরা খাদ্যশস্য বাজেয়াপ্ত হওয়ার আতঙ্কে কিংকর্ত্তব্যবিমূঢ় হোয়ে নানা প্রকারে সেগুলির যথেষ্ট অপচয় কোরেছে। অধিকন্তু সরকারী কর্ম্মচারিগণের প্রচার-কার্য্যের ত্রুটীর জন্য বাংলা সরকারের খাদ্যশস্যের statistics যথাযথভাবে প্রস্তুত হয় নাই অথচ সরকারের কর্ম্মচারিবৃন্দ অযথা, অন্যায় ও ভ্রমাত্মক তালিকা প্রস্তুত করার অগ্রিম পুরস্কারস্বরূপ যথেচ্ছা উৎকোচ গ্রহণ কোরে প্রচুর লাভবান হোয়েছেন।

এখন একবার মজুদবিরোধী আন্দোলনটীর অভ্যন্তরে তাকানো যাক। এতে খাদ্যাভাব-পূরণের কোন বালাই নাই, খাদ্যশস্য সরবরাহের কোনো দায়িত্ব নাই, সে শস্য স্থানান্তরিত বা হস্তান্তরিত হবার পক্ষে কোনো বাধা নাই,—আছে কেবল দায়িত্ব এড়ানোর অপচেষ্টা। কাজেই এই আন্দোলন স্বপ্নের ন্যায় অলীক, খেয়ালের ন্যায় বাজে কিম্বা স্বপ্নের চেয়েও মিথ্যা, খেয়ালের চেয়ে শূন্য, তা'ছাড়া খেয়ালের মাথায় কোনো কর্ত্তব্য কোরতে গেলে যে অকর্ত্তব্য করারই যে লোকের পক্ষে বেশী সম্ভাবনা—সেকথা কে না জানে এবং মন্ত্রীরা মাননীয় হোলেও লোক বটেন। মজুদ-বিরোধী আন্দোলনের ফলে প্রমাণিত হোয়েছে যে খাদ্যশস্য বিষয়ে বাংলা—ঘাটতি এলেকা, এবং প্রয়োজনের খাতিরে গালি দিয়ে এ সত্যকে মিথ্যা বোলে চালিয়ে দিতে চাইলেও সে আপনার কাজ সমানে কোরে যাবে। যেটা যতটুকু পরিমাণে সত্য তাকে সেই পরিমাণে যদি না

নামি, তবে হয় সে কাণে ধোরে মানাবে নয়তো একদিন যে কোনো দিক দিয়েই হোক তার পাওনা সুদশুদ্ধ আদায় কোরে ছাড়বে। তারপর পাঁচ কোটি বাঙালীর খাদ্য-বিধাতা সচিব মহাশয় আবালবৃদ্ধ-যুবা-স্ত্রী-পুরুষ নির্ব্বিশেষে যুক্তাহার বিহারের বিধান দিয়ে বাংলাদেশে যোগাভ্যাসকে compulsory subject কোরে দিয়েছেন। এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে পরমাত্মা সাক্ষাৎকারের পথ বাংলাতে গিয়ে আত্মারামের খাঁচাছাড়া হবার পথটা সুগম কোরে দিয়েছেন। সৃষ্টিকর্ত্তার নির্দ্দিষ্ট বরাদ্দ নিঃশেষ হোতে বহুভোজী অপেক্ষা স্বল্পভোজী অধিক দিন লাগে এজন্য সে বহুভোজী অপেক্ষা অনেক দিন বাঁচে এবং না খেয়ে মোরতে মানুষের আরো অধিক দিন লাগে, নৈলে বাংলাদেশ এতদিন টিকে থাকতো না। মানুষের উপরই মানুষ সব চেয়ে বেশী অত্যাচার কোরবে এইটে বুঝেই বিধাতা তাকে বোধ হয় শক্ত কোরেই গোড়ে দিয়েছেন।

মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী পূর্ব্বভূতই হোন বা পরভূতই হোন উপদ্রব কি কিছু কোমেছে? বরং ভূতের উপদ্রব উত্তরোত্তর বেড়েই চোলেছে। ১৯৩৫ সালের Government of India Act তন্ত্রের বিধানে মন্ত্রিত্বের যোগাসনে বসামাত্র সকলকেই ভূতে পায় আর সে ভূত কেওড়াতলার যে সে ভূত নয় একেবারে সাগরপারের গো ভূত, স্বয়ং ভূতনাথের দোহাইও তার বেলায় কোন কাজে লাগে না। ফলে কলের পুতুলের ন্যায় ভূতের খামখেয়ালী মেজাজে সায় দিয়ে দিয়ে মন্ত্রীদের চোলতে হয়। টিপু সুলতানের কোনো বংশধর যদি নিজেকে মৈশুরের রাজা বলেন তাতে তাঁর পরিষদবর্গ সায় দিতে পারে, কিন্তু রাজত্ব মিলবে কি? বহু মানুষের কাছ হোতে মানুষ যা চায় কলের কাছ থেকে তা পেতে পারে না। যেহেতু কল সম্মুখে উপস্থিত করে দান করে না।

আমার আসল কথা এই যে এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর কর্ম্মপদ্ধতিতে আমাদের খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধানের কোনো আশা কোরতে পারিনে, এবং ভূতপূর্ব্ব মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধান কোরতে পারেন নি বোলে বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর দায়িত্ব এড়ানোর ব্যর্থ প্রয়াসকেও আমরা ক্ষমা কোরতে পারিনে। একজনে একটা কান কেটেছে বোলে দ্বিতীয় ব্যক্তি গামছা দুকানই কেটে রাখবে এর বাহাদুরি কোথায় বুঝতে পারি না!

খাদ্য-সমস্যার একমাত্র সমাধান হোচ্ছে দেশে যাতে অধিকতর পরিমাণে খাদ্যশস্য জন্মায় তার ব্যবস্থা করা। অন্য প্রদেশের মুখাপেক্ষী হোয়ে এবং তীব্র ও তীক্ষ্ণ সমালোচনা কোরে এ সমস্যার সমাধান কখনো হবে না। তার জন্য যত কিছু উপায় উদ্ভাবন করা প্রয়োজন সব কিছুই কোরতে হবে। এর জন্য দৃঢ় সংকল্পযুক্ত স্থায়ী ও ব্যাপক আন্দোলনের প্রয়োজন। পল্লীসংগঠন ও পল্লীসংস্কার আদৌ সহজ কাজ নয়। তার জন্যে চাই, অটল সংকল্প, অসীম ধৈর্য্য ও অধ্যবসায়। রাজনৈতিক উত্তেজনাপূর্ণ আন্দোলনের সহিত সংযুক্ত থাকায় আমাদের দেশে পল্লীসংগঠন এ পর্য্যন্ত নামেই পর্য্যবসিত হোয়েছে। আনন্দের কথা, আশার কথা, বর্ত্তমান সচিবসঙ্ঘের grow more food campaignএর প্রতি অতিরিক্ত মাত্রায় পক্ষপাত দৃষ্টি আকৃষ্ট হোয়েছে এবং তার একটা কারণ এই হোতে পারে,—যেমন গানের গলা অনেকের আছে, কিন্তু সঙ্গীত-প্রতিভা অল্প লোকেরই থাকতে দেখা যায়, এই জন্য অনেকেই গান গাইতে পারেন না, রাগ রাগিনী গাইতে পারেন; তেমি অনেকেরই হয়তো মন্ত্রী হবার আকাঙ্ক্ষা আছে কিন্তু সুযোগের অভাবে মন্ত্রিত্ব লাভ না কোরতে পেরে Parliamentary Secretary হোতে হোয়েছে। ফলে এখানে বারো হাত কাঁকুড়ের তের হাত বীচির স্থলে বিকল্পে তের হাত কাঁকুড়ের সতেরো হাত বীচি হোয়ে পোড়েছে। যদ্দুরা আমরা সকলেই আশা কোরতে পারি grow more food campaignএর বিজয় রথের গতি দ্রুততর হওয়ার ফলে বাংলাদেশে চালের অভাব হোলে কি আসে যায়, দেশের লোক খাদ্যাভাবে মোরবে না অন্ততঃ কাঁকুড় খেয়ে বাঁচবে।

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY : On a point of explanation, Sir, এই মাত্র আমার জনৈক বন্ধু, আমার কানে এনেছেন যে আমি নাকি, সন্তোষ কুমার বসু মহাশয়কে, তথাকথিত বা so called congress member বলেছি।

Mr. SPEAKER : Order, Order!

Babu NARENDRA NARAYAN CHAKRABARTY : বক্তৃতার মুখে ঠিক কি কথা বলেছি, তা আমার এখন মনে নেই কিন্তু আমার বিশ্বাস কংগ্রেসের তথাকথিত অন্যদল—এই কথাই ব্যবহার করেছে। যদি ভুলক্রমে অমনিতর কথা আমার মুখ থেকে বেরিয়ে থাকে আমি সে জন্য দুঃখ প্রকাশ করছি এবং আমি একথা বলে থাকলে তা' প্রত্যাহারও করছি। আমি কোন দিন এমন শব্দ বা বাক্য আমার বক্তৃতায় ব্যবহার করি না যা কোন ব্যক্তি বা দল বিশেষকে অপমান করতে পারে। আমার উচ্চতর বংশ মর্য্যাদা আমাকে তা' করতে দেয় না—আর কোন সময়েই সেই বংশ মর্য্যাদার কথা আমি ভুলে যাই না।

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, I will not make any oration now. I will only give certain facts which are directly in my possession with regard to the food situation in my part of the country. You know, Sir, and I hope Mr. Banerjee over there who was in direct possession of all these facts knows this. In my part of the country, I mean the subdivision of Goalundo which is my constituency, crop failed in July, 1942. Mr. Banerjee was good enough to reply to my questions in the Assembly and admitted that crops failed. It remains a fact that in that particular subdivision more or less acute distress prevailed since 1938. To our misfortune the entire crop failed in 1942 and so the distress prevailing today can better be imagined than described. I do not know definitely what is the condition in the subdivisions of Contai and Tamluk in the district of Midnapore. I believe there the condition beggars description. Their condition is such which demands every sympathy and support from any administration that may exist. Nevertheless, my part of the country also demanded response from the administration since the time the crop failed in July, 1942.

Sir, I made a reference of this to the Hon'ble Minister by questions in the Assembly and thereafter by representation and by submitting notes by putting all suggestions possible, and even sometimes I attempted to put certain schemes to him. Then, Sir, I went begging with a begging bowl before him and also before the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food Supply, I mean the Nawab Bahadur. My letters were generally responded to by Mr. Banerjee but when questions were raised as to what was the possible solution he always referred me to the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur from whom no response was received. When I approached Mr. Banerjee for assistance, help was rendered by a reply referring again to the Hon'ble Nawab Bahadur of Dacca. Unfortunately callousness continued until I came in February to make a representation in the matter. A question was put by me but all my efforts to get redress were in vain. Mr. Banerjee could not render any help. We came running up to the Food Minister and I also met the Director of Civil Supplies not once, twice or thrice but more than that. I made representations and I am happy to say that after the formation of the

present Ministry the people of my subdivision are getting some supplies since then and the poorer sections are getting supply of rice at Rs. 15 per maund. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Coalition Party benches.) In this way, Sir, although the distress continues, people are suffering acutely and they have not sufficient food, still something of a supply is available and the people are not entirely without supply because timely help is being rendered by the present Ministry. I may tell you, Sir, that at least something of an equilibrium has been established in my district. Sir, I know of a man in my subdivision who had a huge stock, but he refused to give me any supply. But something had to be done because my family was there in my village home. I offered to purchase stock from him, but he refused to give me any supply at all. Sir, as soon as the food drive was launched its effect in the Goalundo subdivision could be seen then and there. I received a letter from that particular gentleman offering to give me supplies and I was requested to send my man to receive supplies from him. I did accordingly and I got the supply. If the food drive has not done anything else, it has at least established something of an equilibrium in the countryside and in many places people are getting supplies for 15 days or 20 days or one month. There has been some supply of rice and people of all shades or position who were starving before are now getting a supply and are not crying for a morsel of food as before. (Noise from the Opposition benches.) I know, Sir, where the shoe pinches. (Laughter.) In the countryside I notice a marked improvement in the matter of supplies. I also notice that stocks are being moved to Chittagong, Faridpur, Dacca and other districts—east, west and north. This is the effect of the present Ministry's food drive. I also notice that from other countries, I mean Bihar, Orissa and other places, some supplies have come, are coming and will come. Something we have got, are getting and will get.

That is all, Sir, that I have got to say. Therefore, Sir, the tackling of the food problem which was a failure before has become a success due to the efforts of Mr Suhrawardy and for this we are all grateful to him (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Coalition Party benches.)

Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, sitting as I do unattached with any party or group in this House, I think it behoves me that I should not support or oppose any party, be it Government or Opposition, in a partisan spirit, but I should exercise my free judgment and take decision on the merit of the motions before us.

Sir, nothing on earth is dearer than life, and for the preservation of this life food is essential. So when foodstuffs become scarce in the country the anxiety of the people becomes very much acute. And more the anxiety, the more perturbed do the people become and in their utter helplessness they look up to the sovereign authority or more appropriately, the Government of the country, for help and succour. Our Government here is represented by the Ministry which is composed of men elected by the people. Let us therefore see how our own men sitting over our destiny discharge their obligation.

Sir, now to deal effectively and satisfactorily with the food problem at a time when the calamity has spread all over the province is out of the question. To tackle the question with a view to giving substantial relief is also an uphill task and cannot be done overnight. For this some time is necessary. There must also be a clear-cut policy, a comprehensive scheme, a definite programme and a willing heart. The Food Minister has furnished an elaborate programme. It comprises a definite programme and a plan. He has visualised and rightly visualised that import of foodstuffs from outside the province and utilisations of internal food stocks would contribute largely to the solution of the problem, and he rightly thought that there are large stocks locked up in the godowns of the greedy *mahajans*, and that they must be found out and made available to the people. With this view in mind the Food Minister launched upon an anti-hoarding campaign and the result of it is that the *mahajans*, the traders, will now be compelled to surrender their hoards to the Government on requisition. It was in pursuance of that scheme that the food drive was undertaken. The food drive was undertaken not in a spirit which prompted anti-hoarding campaign but it was done with a view to ascertain the real stock of the people and the food requirements of the particular areas. With this end in view, the food campaign was resorted to. Now, the Government is in possession of the actual figures of requirements of the country as well as of the food stocks. So far so good. The food drive was carried on in a spirit to which the people might not take exception. Instructions were issued to the officers that they should, after consulting the opinion of the people and addressing them, form food committees. Food committees were organised accordingly. Surely these have been organised to serve every village and hamlet. In short, everything possible has been done. Now it requires Government to put into action the programme that they have in view. Surely there are certain drawbacks and objectionable features in that programme, but in spite of such shortcomings the scheme presents a workable basis. Criticisms by different speakers have already brought to the notice of the House the defects of the scheme. The question of the exclusion of Calcutta and Howrah from the food drive has already been referred to as unjust and improper. It is said that on account of administrative reasons Calcutta and Howrah were left out, and that the Minister in charge has taken steps to take up those places ere long. If there is cogent reason for exclusion, he certainly has his reasons for not doing it so long, but not otherwise: on this matter opinion will have to be formed by me after hearing the Hon'ble Minister's reply.

Now, Sir, it was a great mistake on the part of the Ministry to have fixed 10 chittaks as the ration for a male per day. I think it, to say the least, is half the daily requirement of an individual. Again, I do not know what has induced the Ministry not to make any provision for children up to the age of 4. Perhaps it is not within the knowledge of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Food Department that rice ceremony takes place on the 7th month after the baby's birth. After the rice ceremony has been gone through the children are taught to eat rice. Therefore provision ought to have been made for the children as well. How did it escape the notice

of the Hon'ble Minister I do not know. He ought to have consulted his party men who come from rural areas. They could have enlightened him. The Hon'ble Minister seems not to have consulted them. Be that as it may, he ought to make a clear statement to explain why Calcutta and Howrah were left out. He must not make a secret of administrative reason but must divulge the entire facts to the House.

Then he has asked the poor agriculturist people to make sacrifice of the surplus stock of food in their possession in times of need for their neighbours, but that is not the basis on which he should have proceeded. This is indeed an abnormal situation and no human being can cope with it. I regard it as a visitation, a punishment from above, in consequence of our Godlessness. God has sent down His wrath on us. If, therefore, the Minister wants to do justice to the cause of the hungry he must look to Heaven and the Holy Quron where he will find a real solution of the problem. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will try to read the passages on Charity in the Holy Book. There charities are classed under two heads—compulsory and optional. He has been dealing with the charity optional. He has asked the village people to release their surplus food in favour of their more needy fellow-brethren, but he has not similarly asked the great men who live sumptuously to make the sacrifice as well, although in their case such sacrifice is compulsory. Extractions should be made from the rich: a sort of tax must be levied on them in order to feed the poor.

Mr. SPEAKER: How long will you take to finish. You have already exceeded the time.

Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE: Only two minutes more, Sir. I would ask the Hon'ble Minister over and again to read the Holy Quron, specially the passages in which charity has been discussed. I would ask him to pay special attention to that, so that he will be out of the wood and money might be available in order to feed the poor. I beg of him to take a lesson from the Holy Quron where he will be able to find a right solution in the right direction. Otherwise he will be groping in the dark, dumbfounded.

Lastly, I would ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge to make a clean breast of the reasons why he left out Calcutta and Howrah from his food census while giving reply.

Adjournment.

The House was adjourned at 9-20 p.m. till 4 p.m. on Wednesday, the 14th July, 1943, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 14th July, 1943, at 4 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Mr. SYED NAUSHER ALI) in the Chair, 13 Hon'ble Ministers and 211 members.

Issue of visitors' tickets.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the proceedings of the House commence I should like to make a statement with regard to the complaint made relating to the issue of visitors' cards by the Secretary of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. I have since looked into the matter and I have no reason to think that any irregularity was committed by him.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Inspection of primary schools.

*61. **Maulvi ABDUL JABBAR:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state—

(a) whether there is any rule for the inspection of the primary schools;

(b) whether the rules are observed by the inspectorate in the district;

(c) the number of primary schools in the district of Dinajpur that have not been inspected during the year 1942; and

(d) what steps do the Government propose to take for better supervision of the primary schools in the said district?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (a) Yes. Under the rules Sub-Inspectors of Schools are to visit each primary school in their respective circles twice a year.

(b) Travelling allowance allotment has been insufficient to enable proper observance of the rules.

(c) Up to the 15th March of the financial year 1942-43, 670 schools had been left unvisited.

(d) More funds will be allotted in future.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: With reference to answer (d), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when that future will come?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The future will come in future.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give us some definite idea about the time when it will be done?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: This question was asked in the last session of the Assembly. I shall take up the matter as soon as possible.

Condition of Pulta and Tallah Pumping Stations.

*62. **Mr. C. W. MILES:** (*a*) Has the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government Department been drawn to the state of affairs prevailing at the Pulta and Tallah Pumping Stations as revealed by the report of the Special Officer in charge of these stations published in the Press on the 16th June, 1943?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have deputed any officer under section 16 of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, to inspect the Pulta and Tallah Pumping Stations?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table a copy of his report to Government?

(*d*) Is it a fact—

(*i*) that there has been a steady deterioration in the condition of the boilers and filter beds and of the water works generally over a period of years; and

(*ii*) if so, what are the reasons for this deterioration?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have taken any action under sections 17 and 18 of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, to ensure that the following works recommended by the Special Officer are immediately carried out:—

(1) installation of the Bhatpara boilers;

(2) thorough overhauling of the big units of Babcock and Wilcox boilers, one by one;

(3) immediate cutting out of the blades of Parsons' turbine No. 1927 and balancing same;

(4) re-blading of this turbine when blades arrive from England;

(5) inspection and thorough overhauling of the other turbines, one by one, by the makers;

(6) clearing of silt from the pre-settling tanks;

(7) replenishment of filter beds as per programme of work submitted by him; and

(8) investigation regarding the cause of deterioration of raw river water?

MINISTER in charge of the PUBLIC HEALTH and LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Yes, the Director of Public Health and the Chief Engineer, Public Health Department, were deputed for this purpose by a Government order issued on the 10th of April, 1943.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) (*i*) Yes.

(*ii*) The reasons appear to be lack of regular maintenance and of proper supervision.

(e) (1), (4) and (6) to (8) Yes.

(2) This will be taken up after one of the new boilers has been installed.

(3) No.

(5) This cannot be done until after action under (4) has been taken.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the lack of regular maintenance and of proper supervision referred to in answer (*d*)(*ii*) has occurred for a period of years, and, if so, for what period?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, for a number of years, and I think, for more than ten or fifteen years.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why Government do not propose to lay a copy of the report on the Table?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: The report of a subordinate officer is confidential.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any time-limit has been imposed on the works to be carried on by the Corporation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Yes, a time-limit was given before and then an officer of the department was sent for inspection and he submitted his report, and after that action has been taken.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Corporation failed to take action under the Government's direction what action do Government propose to take?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Government have only given directions: a time-limit has been given, but they have not agreed to comply with the directions.

Mr. ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government have received the report of the Special Committee appointed by the Corporation for consideration of the Special Officer's report?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: No report has been submitted to the Government.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: With reference to answer (*e*) (2), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long the big units of Babcock and Wilcox boilers are working without overhauling and repairs?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I cannot tell you the number of years, but I can tell you that they are not in good order. That is the report that has been received by me.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long the two bad boilers have been lying waste awaiting to be reinstalled?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I cannot tell the exact time, but it has been for a long time.

Babu ASHUTOSH LAHIRI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government will stay any action on the report of the Special Officer until they have received the report of the Special Committee appointed by the Corporation for the consideration of the report of the Special Officer?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: It is a request for action. The Government has already issued direction, and therefore the question of postponement does not arise at all.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the directions under sections 17 and 18 have included the supply of foodstuffs to the labour at the waterworks?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: No direction was given under section 18. Only one direction has been given under section 16 and after that recently a direction under section 17 has been given. The question of direction under section 18 does not arise.

Clerical staff in heads of departments attached to the Secretariat.

*63. **Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing, separately, up to the 28th February, 1943—

(*a*) the total number of (1) permanent and (2) temporary clerical officers (including sheristadars and Office Superintendents) of the principal heads of departments (including Board of Revenue) attached to the Secretariat,

(*b*) the number of them that are (1) Hindus, (2) Muslims, (3) Scheduled Castes and (4) members of other communities;

(*c*) the percentage of (1) graduates, and (2) non-matriculates, among the communities referred to in (*b*); and

(*d*) amount drawn as salary per month by each of the communities referred to in (*b*)?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra Goswami): The information is not readily available and its collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in war time.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if a list is kept in each department showing the number of officers employed and the amount drawn by each of them as salary?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Lists are no doubt kept in the departments but their collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in war time.

Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID: Sir, my question has not been properly answered. I want to know if such a register is maintained in each department.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which part or parts of all these parts mentioned in (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*) appear to be difficult to collect readily?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: In the opinion of the department the collection of the information required would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in war time.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I have not asked for the opinion of the departments. The question is directed to the Hon'ble Minister in charge and the Government. I am not concerned with the clerks' opinion. Will the Hon'ble Minister state whether after going through each of these parts the Hon'ble Minister is in a position to give his reply as to which of these four parts, namely, (1) total number, (2) the number of them that are Hindus, Muslims, Scheduled Castes and members of other communities, (3) the percentage of graduates and non-matriculates and (4) the amount drawn as salary per month by each of the communities, is difficult?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: All the four items.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that there is one consolidated list of all the Secretariat staff who draw monthly salaries from the Secretariat and the whole information can be obtained—at least except (*c*)—from one register?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I have nothing further to add.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if the reply that is here given was examined by him and if it is his reply or the department's reply?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: It is my reply most definitely.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister without any excitement let the House know if he had any time to go through the file prepared for him by the department?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I object to this question.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I also object to the demeanour of the Hon'ble Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: On a point of privilege, Sir. Is a member allowed to insinuate about framing an answer as Dr. Sanyal is doing?

Mr. SPEAKER: Certainly not.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: The Hon'ble Minister has said that this is the department's reply. I am entitled to question further whether the department's reply was examined by him. I do not find any objection in it and if it is an insinuation, it has been drawn upon him by himself. I cannot help it.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as I am concerned, I did not hear him say that it was the department's reply. He said it was the opinion of the department.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I said—in the opinion of the department, and I am bound to consult the opinion of the department.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state how long he thinks it would take to make the information available.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I want notice.

Clerical staff of the Secretariat.

*64. **Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*a*) the present number of (1) permanent and (2) temporary clerical officers (including Registrars and Head Assistants) employed in the various Departments of the Secretariat;

(*b*) the number of them that are (1) Hindus, (2) Muslims, (3) Scheduled Castes and (4) members of other communities;

(*c*) the percentage of (1) graduates and (2) non-Matriculates among the communities referred to in (*b*);

(*d*) the amount drawn as salary per month by each of the communities referred to in (*b*)?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: The information is not readily available and its collection would involve an amount of time and labour that would not be justifiable in war time.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Can the Hon'ble Minister give us some idea about the length of time and the amount of labour that would be necessary to have the information?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I have already answered that it will require an amount of time and labour which will not be justified.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Let us have an idea about the amount of time and labour.

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Inordinate amount of time.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: On a point of order, Sir. The question from me as well as from the honourable member from the other side was how much time it would take to make the information available?

Mr. SPEAKER: His reply was "inordinate amount of time".

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: What does he mean by "inordinate amount of time"?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The rules provide for questions and answers. The rules do not provide for frivolities. Sir, we have a definite and specific question asked and we expect an answer and the answer must not be in terms that evade the question altogether. Here a specific question is asked and, Sir, you in your wisdom will see that readily the whole question can be replied by setting one officer of the Secretariat or even if an officer is not available, one of the many Parliamentary Secretaries that are without any job can go round the department and collect it in half an hour's time.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is this speech for? What is your point of order?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My point of order is this If the answer cannot be given for some inconvenience that the Ministry may be feeling, let them frankly state that They cannot evade the answer by putting up such frivolous replies

Mr. SPEAKER: They may give any answer they like and you may draw your own inference.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: When the Hon'ble Minister says that it will take inordinate time does he suggest that it will take something like a month?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: I can say nothing definitely.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of employing the services of Parliamentary Secretaries to obtain the information available within the Secretariat building?

The Hon'ble Mr. TULSI CHANDRA GOSWAMI: It is not possible for Parliamentary Secretaries to gather this information.

Relief operation conducted by certain non-official organisation.

***65. Mr. P. BANERJEE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether activities of the Diamond Harbour Relief Committee (a non-official organisation) conducting operations in the cyclone-affected parts of 24-Parganas district were obstructed under orders of the Subdivisional Officer;

(ii) whether permission for the boats carrying food and drinking water was withheld;

(iii) whether the boatmen were prosecuted and fined on the ground of their being in the denied area, pending renewal of permits applied for;

(iv) whether different relief organisations, viz., Diamond Harbour Relief Committee, Marwari Relief Committee and Jana Seva Mandali, were ordered to deposit rice and other foodstuffs in the Nazarat; and

(v) whether all facilities of work were withdrawn in respect of certain organisation that refused to carry out as ordered at (iv) above?

(b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(i) the reason thereof, and

(ii) who is responsible for the orders and obstructions as referred to in (a)?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tarak Nath Mukerjea): (a) (i), (ii), (iv) and (v) No

(iii) This part of the question concerns the Home Department.

(b) Does not arise.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that several complaints as mentioned in question (a)(i), (ii) and (iv) were submitted to Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKHERJEA: No.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state whether he has answered this "No" from personal knowledge or by *anday*?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I have already given my answer to (a) (i), (ii), (iv) and (v) and I do not find anything more in the file

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that several complaints were submitted to Government?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to his answer (a) (i), (ii), (iv) and (v), will the Hon'ble Minister please state if he is aware that his predecessor in office actually received a written complaint from the honourable member who put the question and endorsed by some of us who personally went to the place and visited and saw the Subdivisional Officer and found that difficulties were being created by him?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I am not aware

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to his answer (a) (iii) where he says that this part of the question concerns the Home Department, will the Hon'ble Minister please state if the department concerned took the

trouble to obtain the information from the Home Department as was the practice in the previous Government and supply complete answer thereto?

Mr. SPEAKER: This question, I think, requires looking into.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On the previous occasion when the then Hon'ble Mr. P. N. Banerjee replied to questions relating to Midnapore, some of them related to the Revenue Department and others related to the Home Department and the Hon'ble Minister in charge was good enough at that time——

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: My present question is: Will the Hon'ble Minister please state if, instead of avoiding this part of the question, he enquired of the Home Department with a view to supplying complete answer to the question given notice of?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: No

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: In view of this inability to obtain information from the Home Department, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of giving a more complete reply at a future date and take this as notice?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERLJEA: I can accept this as notice, but the rules have got to be seen whether this department can do it.

Alteration of procedure of land registration by the Commissioner, Rajshahi Division.

***66. Maulvi AZHAR ALI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that by a circular from the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division the following procedure in Land Registration case has become binding in the said Division, viz.:—

(*i*) for each mauza a separate petition is to be filed if share is not equal in each separate mauza; and

(*ii*) in case of inheritance every heir is to file separate petition for respective share or shares?

(*b*) Does the same procedure obtain in the other Divisions in Bengal?

(*c*) If not, do the Government propose to follow the same procedure throughout Bengal?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) (*i*) Yes, for Pabna only.

(*ii*) No.

(*b*) and (*c*) No.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: With reference to answer (*a*) (*i*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is any such rule from the Board of Revenue specially for the district of Pabna?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Sir, I could not follow him.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: The question is whether for each mauza a separate petition is to be filed if share is not equal in each separate mauza, and the answer is "Yes". My supplementary question is whether there is such a rule or any special order from the Board of Revenue that that rule should apply only to the district of Pabna?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: It is not a fact.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: With reference to answers (*b*) and (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the same procedure obtains in other districts of Bengal or this separate treatment should be meted out in the case of Pabna only?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Sir, the procedure of registration is different in different districts. This is because the unit of registration in the existing Register D is either *mahalwari* or *Mauzawari*.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: Is there any order from the Board of Revenue?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I have nothing more to add.

Typhoon devastation in Diamond Harbour subdivision.

*67. **Mr. P. BANERJI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether it is a fact that the news of the devastation caused by the typhoon on the 16th October, 1942, in the Diamond Harbour subdivision was not published till the 2nd November;

(*ii*) whether the name of the Diamond Harbour subdivision, the actual spot of the havoc in the 24-Parganas, was mentioned in Government Press-Note; and

(*iii*) whether any survey of the extent of loss of human lives, cattle, crops, etc., was made?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*iii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for not publishing it for general information?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) (*i*) and (*iii*) Yes.

(*ii*) It was referred to as the southern part of the 24-Parganas district.

(*b*) The information was made available to the Press as soon as the compiled survey figures were available.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when and in which particular press were these figures actually published?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has got readily in hand what are the latest survey figures of the total loss in the Diamond Harbour subdivision referred to in the question?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Loss of human lives 1,390; cattle 23,743; number of huts damaged or destroyed—25,201; damaged crop is about 13·82 lakhs of maunds of paddy.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state why is it that the news of the devastation which occurred on the 16th October, 1942, was not published until the 2nd November? What was the reason?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Certificate cases in Pabna district.

***68. Mr. A. M. ABDUL HAMID:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*a*) the number of certificate cases (for the realisation of road, public work and education cess) pending at the close of the year, 1941-42, in the district of Pabna;

(*b*) the number of such cases filed during the current year up to 31st January, 1943;

(*c*) the number of cases for which sale proclamation had to be issued with respect to the—

(1) pending cases, and

(2) cases filed during the current year, up to 31st January, 1943;

(*d*) the number of cases in which estates were put to auction, up to 31st January, 1943;

(*e*) the number of cases in which estates were either sold or money realised from certificate debtors as the result of the issue of sale proclamation;

(*f*) the number of cases in which the estates could not be sold for want of bidders; and

(*g*) the number of cases in which money could not be realised from the certificate debtors by any other means?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) 4,045.

(*b*) 4,612.

(*c*) (1) 466 and (2) nil.

(*d*) 466.

(*e*) In 51 cases the estates were sold and in 112 cases money was realised from the certificate debtors.

(*f*) 303.

(*g*) In 5,649 cases no amount could be realised by service of notice under section 7 and execution of distress warrants.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answers (*b*) and (*g*) which show that 4,612 cases were filed during the current year up to 31st January, 1943, and in 5,649 cases no amount could be realised by service of notice under section 7 and execution of distress warrants, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if the Government is considering the desirability of stopping the issue of certificates until better times come?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: Circulars have been issued to issue certificates in those cases in which they are going to be time-barred. These cases will be considered on their own merits, so that no undue hardship might be created to the people

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if apart from the forced issue of certificates Government have in the past or are at present considering the desirability of taking some other action, namely, assuming powers under the Defence of India Rules to suspend the mischief that the Limitation Act is likely to cause and to avoid limitations in cases where exemptions are likely to be allowed?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleassed to state whether Government is considering the desirability of renewing these bonds for agricultural loans instead of issuing certificates?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Realisation of arrear rents and cess in Tippera.

*69. **Mr. JONAB ALI MAJUMDAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the number of cases in which the garnishee proceedings have been adopted to realise arrear rents and cess in the district of Tippera from April, 1942, to 28th February, 1943; and

(*ii*) whether the garnishee proceedings have been allowed to realise arrear cess or both cess and arrear rents?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of stopping the garnishee proceedings in the district of Tippera during the present abnormal situation?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) The garnishee procedure was adopted in respect of 213 certificates filed against the defaulting proprietors for the realisation of arrear road, public works and education cesses and upon 609 groups of tenants of the defaulting proprietors demand notices were issued for arrear cesses only.

(*b*) No. The tenants are paying their dues on receipt of demand notices.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Revenue Department of the Government has found that the garnishee procedure is illegal?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I am not aware of that.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister please tell us the number of tenants included in the 609 groups?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: I want notice.

Recovery of Agricultural Loan in Kurigram subdivision.

***70. Kazi EMDADUL HAQUE:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether in Kurigram subdivision certificates are being issued for the recovery of agricultural loan?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government have ascertained whether the agriculturists are in a position to pay the loan?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of suspending the recovery of such loan till the present food crisis in the country is over?

(*d*) Has the Hon'ble Minister received any petition from the people of Ashtamirchar in police-station Chilmari for withholding the certificates?

(*e*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, has been taken on it?

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: (*a*) During the current year 2,152 certificates have only recently been filed to avoid limitation. The old certificates are being executed as this is the harvest time of *aus* paddy.

(*b*) Yes. The cultivators are getting more price by the sale of rice and paddy owing to increased prices of food grains now ruling in the market.

(*c*) Does not arise.

(*d*) Yes.

(*e*) Care was taken to mitigate hardship in deserving cases where the people were in distress. Certificates were filed only against the wilful defaulters and in cases where the dues would otherwise be time-barred.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state on what information he has been able to find out that the harvesting time of *aus* paddy had already begun at the time when the question was asked? The question must have been asked at least three weeks ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is an argument Everybody knows the harvesting time. That is not a question

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the reply of the Hon'ble Minister is based on information received. I want to know what is the source of the Hon'ble Minister's information at the time of receipt of the question that it was harvesting time.

The Hon'ble Mr. TARAK NATH MUKERJEA: The answer that has been given is based on the report received from a local officer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which District Officer referred to which part of the district when he said that the harvesting time for *aus* crop had begun at the time when the certificate was issued?

Mr. SPEAKER: That is going too much into detail. I do not allow the question.

Election of President of District School Board, Mymensingh.

*71. **Maulvi MD. ISRAIL:** (a) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact—

(i) that the date of special meeting for electing of a President of the Mymensingh District School Board due to be held on the 21st February, 1942, was postponed to a later date;

(ii) that the notice of postponement was served on many members after the 21st February, 1942; and

(iii) that the delay in sending notices has caused unnecessary expenditure to many members?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason for postponement of the election and the delay for passing such order?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN (a) (i) Yes

(ii) No. The notice intimating members of the postponement and fixing the 28th February, 1942, at 12 noon as the date and time of the meeting was issued to all members of the District School Board on the 15th February, 1942, and was addressed to them by name to their address as given by the District School Board office

(iii) Does not arise

(b) The District Magistrate postponed the special meeting to a later date under orders of Government There was no delay.

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: With reference to answer (b), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what causes led the Government to order postponement of the election to 28th February, 1942?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The orders were given by the late Ministry.

Appointment of Inspector of Smoke Nuisances Commission, Bengal.

*72. **Mr. ABDUL KARIM:** (a) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Public Health and Local Self-Government Department aware—

(i) that the post of Inspector of Smoke Nuisances in the Bengal Smoke Nuisances Service was advertised by the Public Service Commission, Bengal, in the *Calcutta Gazette* in August last, 1942; and

(ii) that it was reserved for the Muslim candidates?

(b) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the post has since been filled up by a Muslim?

(c) If the answer to (b) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(i) the number of Muslim candidates with requisite minimum qualifications who applied for the post;

(*ii*) the number of them that were graduates in Engineering, if any;

(*iii*) the reason for the delay in filling up the post by a Muslim;

(*iv*) the name of the person officiating in the post; and

(*v*) what is his academic qualification?

(*d*) Do the Government contemplate to fill up the post by a Muslim shortly?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) (*i*) to (*iii*) Only one Muslim candidate applied for the post. He did not possess the requisite qualification. The Public Service Commission do not agree to furnish further materials as they are of opinion that the methods adopted by them in making the selection should not be open to discussion or criticism on the floor of the House.

(*iv*) Mr. D. P. Ganguly.

(*v*) A statement is laid on the Table.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Statement referred to in answer to clause (c) (v) of starred question No. 72.

(1) Passed the Junior Cambridge Examination with Distinction from Victoria European Boys' School, Kurseong, in 1931;

(2) Passed the Senior Cambridge Examination attaining Honours standard from the same institution in 1933;

(3) Passed the Board of Apprenticeship Training Admission Examination in First Class;

(4) Served as an Apprentice in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering at Messrs. Burn & Company, Limited, for over 4 years.

(5) Attended the Calcutta Technical School in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Course for about 4 years and passed the Final Examination in Mechanical Engineering held under the Board of Apprenticeship;

(6) Membership of the Institution of Engineers (India);

(7) Worked as Foreman in charge at the Bengal Government Sawmill for about 9 months;

(8) Worked as Smoke Observer under the Bengal Smoke Nuisances Commission for over 3½ years and acquired considerable knowledge of Mechanical appliances used for the abatement of smoke.

Irrigation works in the Rajshahi district.

***73. Maulvi MANIRUDDIN AKHAND:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware that major portion of both *aus* and *aman* paddy crops was seriously affected for drought and *aman* paddy was destroyed for excessive rainfall and consequent flood specially in low-lying area of the Rajshahi district?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of re-excavating tanks and opening up existing channels by silt-clearing in the district?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna Pain): (*a*) I am informed that some portion of the *aus* paddy crop was damaged by drought and that the *aman* paddy was also damaged, but only slightly by untimely rainfall and by fungus.

(*b*) Schemes for execution as emergency irrigation projects were recently called for from District Boards. The District Board of Rajshahi have submitted twenty such schemes, which are now under investigation.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*b*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which of the 20 schemes were received and by which date?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Very recently.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if it is a fact that nearly 45 schemes of the District Board of Rajshahi were under consideration for the last 3 years?

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Suggestions were called for only a few months back and 20 schemes were received only recently. I cannot say anything as regards 3 years mentioned by Dr. Sanyal.

Production of paddy and "Grow more food" campaign.

*74. **Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department be pleased to lay on the Table a statement showing—

(*i*) the estimated production of paddy in maunds of this year;

(*ii*) the normal production of paddy in maunds a year;

(*iii*) the prospect of the *rabi* crop this year in the Province; and

(*iv*) the population of Bengal as recorded in the last census?

(*b*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the production of paddy is less this year?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the measure the Government is considering to take to grow more food?

MINISTER in charge of the ACRICULTURE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hosain): (*a*) (*i*) The estimated production is 303,771,300 maunds of paddy.

(*ii*) The average outturn is 410,751,400 maunds of paddy.

(*iii*) It is reported that there has been considerable increase in acreage as compared with previous year. The prospects are fairly good.

(*iv*) 60,342,000.

(*b*) and (*c*) Yes. Schemes for wide distribution of *aus* and *aman* paddy seeds and also of *rabi* seeds are already in operation. With a view to bringing new lands under cultivation steps have also been taken to improve irrigation facilities and for this purpose the District Officers have been authorised to take up small irrigation schemes which will be of practical utility. A

scheme for irrigation by means of Persian wheels has also been sanctioned by Government. Propaganda by means of posters, slogans, leaflets, etc., is being intensified to grow more food.

I have to add something. Schemes are being matured for reclamation and cultivation of cultivable waste lands, for increasing the area under more than one crop, for increasing the yield generally by extensive use of manure and departmental improved seeds, and for introducing new *rabi* crops such as wheat, maize and millet and schemes for increasing the area under *rabi* are also being matured.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: In view of the urgency and the necessity of getting more food in the province, is the Government considering the desirability of putting jute lands for paddy cultivation, I mean, lands on which paddy can be grown?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: As a matter of fact paddy has already been cultivated this year even on lands which were licensed for jute.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: While fixing the quota for jute cultivation is the Government considering the desirability of setting apart those lands only for jute cultivation on which nothing but jute can be grown and setting free all other lands for paddy cultivation?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: That is a matter for the consideration of the Jute Advisory Committee.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: With regard to answers (*b*) and (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the amount of *aus* and *aman* paddy seeds respectively that have been actually distributed all over Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: As regards *aus* I am not in a position to give the figures just now. As regards *aman* 3 lakhs of maunds have been distributed.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that while large quantities of *aus* and *aman* paddy seeds were available it was due to the negligence of the local officers that seeds were not procured and distributed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: For *aman* paddy alone 66 lakhs was spent as against only 9 lakhs spent last year.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: My question has not been answered, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I cannot help it.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Perhaps the Hon'ble Minister has not understood the question.

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I have understood it.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Sir, my question is this: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it was due to the negligence of the officers, although finance was there, although seeds were there, that those seeds were not procured and distributed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Seeds were distributed where there were no seeds. The first consideration was given to those places where seeds were wanting.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how much money has lapsed?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Not a single pie.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*) (*ii*), (*iv*) and (*v*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which answer relates to which year? In answer (*a*)(*iii*), it is stated that the estimated production, viz., 303,771,300 maunds relates to this year. Does it mean that it relates to the year that has gone?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: All these figures refer to the year ending 31st December, 1942.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If that is so, how does the answer (*a*)(*v*) become relevant?

Mr. SPEAKER: You are arguing, Dr. Sanyal.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: If the reference is to a past event, the question of prospect at the moment of reply does not arise.

Mr. SPEAKER: That may be so. You can draw your own inference.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state which answer relates to which year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: This refers to the *rabi* crop which of course is of the year 1943.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to tell us whether the Government has received any schemes from the District Officers for irrigation purposes?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Schemes have been called for. Some schemes have been executed by some of the District Officers and Rs. 10,000 has been placed at their disposal for small irrigational projects.

Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN: With reference to answers (*b*) and (*c*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the total amount proposed to be spent for the purpose of improving irrigation facilities in Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: That has not yet been settled.

Mr. A. F. STARK: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if Government have received any recommendation with regard to irrigation schemes from Sir William Stampe; and, if so, what action has been taken thereon?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Discussions and negotiations with Sir William Stampe are going on regarding irrigation by pumps, run by Diesel oil engines and electric plants and other methods.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state as to when free distribution of *aus* and *aman* seeds commenced in Eastern Bengal?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Distribution had commenced before we took over the reins of office with regard to *aus* paddy seeds. *Aman* seeds were distributed about the middle of May last.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED KHONDKAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any *aus* and *aman* seeds were distributed in the district of Faridpur?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I think some seeds were distributed, but I have not got the papers with me to give the exact figure.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With reference to answer (*a*)(*vi*), namely, that the estimated production is 303 million maunds of paddy, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the actual production of paddy as against this estimate?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: That is the actual estimated production. Production is always estimated and it is never weighed.

Khan Bahadur SHAH ABDUR RAUF: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether manure plays an important part in increasing the production of crops; and, if so, what arrangements Government have made for the supply of manure to the cultivators?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Certainly, manure plays an important part, and Government has declared a manure week from the 19th of this month when all the cultivators will be asked to dig manure pits and will be shown how it is to be scientifically preserved and how new manures can be manufactured and this will go on for one week and after that the Jute Regulation Officers will have instructions to inspect these manure pits and report the progress of collection of manure in each month.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: With regard to answer (v), namely, that there has been a considerable increase of acreage as compared with previous year, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the Table the actual figures of acreage for 1941-42 and for 1942-43? Here the figures given are only estimates and not actuals, and it is contradictory to the reply given in a previous session that the acreage has fallen——

Mr. SPEAKER: Dr Sanyal, you need not explain: you put your question direct

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: The actual acreage is not with me just now, but last year's acreage I can give it I get notice For this year I cannot give the actuals which are only an estimate

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: This year has been explained as the year ending 31st December, 1942, and he is not probably following the question properly

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question, Dr Sanyal?

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: I am trying to clear up The answers to all these questions relate to some years and my first question was as to which portion of the answer relates to which year and he has said that it relates to the year ending 31st December, 1942 Then he has taken credit that this year's prospects are fairly good With regard to the portion relating to *rabi* crops he says it refers to the early part of 1943

Now my question is, what was the actual acreage of that period to which this question relates compared with the immediately preceding year?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: That acreage is not available without notice

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that in this very House in a previous session figures were given showing deterioration or decrease in the acreage?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: In the previous year there was probably a decrease but this is the estimate for the present year.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Sir, the *rabi* crop estimate cannot be made now——

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that you are not satisfied with the answer given and you think that he is not capable of understanding your question. But that does not give you any right to discuss the question here and to explain times without number the same thing over and over again.

Srijut MANINDRA BHUSAN SINHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give the names of districts where Persian Wheel Irrigation scheme has been introduced?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: I want notice.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability of constructing fences under section 13 of the Water-hyacinth Act?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur SAIYED MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: Yes, it is being considered.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(answers to which were laid on the table)

Supply of seeds of paddy in Jamalpur subdivision.

30. Mr. FAZLUR RAHMAN (Mymensingh): (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture Department aware—

(*i*) of the scarcity of seeds of *aus* and *aman* paddy in the thanas of Sherpur, Nalitabari and Nakhla of Jamalpur subdivision in Mymensingh district; and

(*ii*) of the fact that it is now high time for sowing paddy in low lands?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps he has taken or intends to take to supply sufficient seeds of *aus* and *aman* paddy in the aforesaid area immediately?

The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Saiyed MUAZZAMUDDIN HOSAIN: (*a*) No; but there is demand for paddy seed on loan due to high prices in the Jamalpur subdivision as well as in other subdivisions of the Mymensingh district. There is no scarcity of seed in the area.

(*b*) Arrangement has been made to purchase and distribute about 1,000 maunds to the needy cultivators of this subdivision. It is contemplated to distribute *aman* paddy seed also during the ensuing season. Last year about 5,000 maunds were distributed in this subdivision.

Uniformity of weights in the Nilphamari subdivision.

32. Mr. KSHETRA NATH SINGHA: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce, Labour and Industries Department aware that two kinds of weights, namely 80 and 60 tolas per seer, are used in shops, bazars, etc., in the subdivisional town of Nilphamari in the district of Rangpur?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of introducing standard weight in a particular locality for the benefit of the public?

The Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja SHAHABUDDIN: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The member is referred to the reply given to starred question No. 11 on the 5th July, 1943.

Representation from Warders and Jamadars of Bengal Jails.

33. Mr. HARENDRA KUMAR SUR: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Warders and Jamadars of many of the Bengal Jails have submitted representations to the Government for granting them—

(*i*) increase in pay;

(*ii*) dearness allowance; and

(*iii*) leave and leave allowances?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what action, if any, has been taken in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the HOME DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin): (*a*) Yes. (There are no "Jamadars" in jails, perhaps the honourable member means head-warders.)

(*b*) A supplementary dearness allowance and an emergency areas bonus have been sanctioned. Arrangements have also been made whereby warders will be supplied with basic rations from Government stock at reasonable prices. The question of granting further concessions is under my consideration.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble the Chief Minister be pleased to state what steps have been taken so far in regard to the petitions received from the employees referred to in question (*a*) and how long similar prayers from these people have been under the consideration of Government?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: May I refer the honourable member to my answer to (*b*)?

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the maximum pay of head warders and what is the price charged for rice or *atta* supplied to them?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: There are two questions, and to which am I to reply first?

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: What is the maximum pay of head warders?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: What is the value charged for rice and *atta* supplied to them?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: At controlled rates.

Mr. DHIRENDRA NATH DATTA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if any steps have been taken to remedy their complaints regarding leave as also leave allowance? Sir, this question has not been properly answered.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I ask for notice.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: *In view of frequent reports of assaults in jails, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of keeping these warders and jamadars satisfied so that the sufferings of the unfortunate prisoners might not increase?*

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I do not accept the assumption of the honourable member that there have been frequent assaults: I think that is without foundation.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Is it a fact that some enquiries had to be directed regarding the assaults on prisoners in the Presidency Jail which took place in April last?

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: I objected to "frequent" assaults

Special Motion.

Mr. UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, within the time allotted to my share it is not possible for me to describe fully the gloomy picture that has overtaken the countryside today. So, I shall satisfy myself by giving you a partial picture. Before I started for Calcutta after the food drive had been undertaken by the present Ministry I had seen that there was a large influx of beggars to the town from the countryside and specially from the subdivision of Nilphamari which is within the district of Rangpur. The state of affairs that I had seen was that at night thousands of beggars without any shelter used to lie down on both sides of the station road here and there in the town and also on the station platform and death was already beginning to take its toll. Only two days ago I have received a letter from home to the effect that daily 10 or 12 persons, mostly beggars, are dying of cholera and the municipality has forbidden the use of unfiltered water. Another member of the same constituency, Mr. Nagendra Nath Mahalanabis of the Upper House, received a letter to the effect that up to this time about 200 beggars have died and cholera has become so much virulent by this time that some people of the town are going out of it. That is a state of affairs which is, I think, only the beginning, we do not know what will be the end during the coming five or six months.

Sir, my submission through you to the House is that though this state of affairs is due to a variety of reasons and factors, yet the actions and misconceived actions of the present Ministry are mainly and greatly responsible for accelerating the pace. First of all, Sir, I should mention that by the statement of the Hon'ble the Food Minister that there is no deficiency of food in Bengal the people of Bengal were lulled into a sense of false security. The result had been that the people of Bengal being led to this false sense of security did not try to conserve food, as they could have done had there been a warning by the Government and the true picture had been given to them. The second baneful effect of the statement had been that people who would have tried to grow more food—though it was the clear duty of Government and it was the professed duty of Government to strive every nerve to grow more food this year—by this false sense of security had not done what could have been done though the best three months have been

lost. The transplantation season has already begun and it is useless now to talk of "grow more food" because there is no scope for it. Cultivators cannot derive any benefit by any "grow more food" campaign that may be undertaken by Government today

Sir, the next point which I want to place before the House is that it is my deep suspicion that the Government is not yet decided in its mind as to the true figure of our demand and supply which is the main thing that should regulate our actions in striving our best to save the province from this great disaster. There are reasons behind it and as I had some opportunity to look into the department only cursorily I know that there is some jugglery of figures which is mainly responsible for this uncertainty so far as supply is concerned. Now, it can be said that you have no indecision in your mind because the supplies from outside having been stopped it is only the Director of Agriculture's report which is our only asset coupled with what we may get from other sister provinces or even from outside through the mercy of the Government of India. But as regards the demand there is indecision so far as my suspicion goes There are three sets of figures. First of all the Marketing Department of the Government of India tells us that Bengal's *per capita* annual consumption is 344 lbs If we calculate on that figure the annual consumption of Bengal for 60.3 millions of people comes up to 92 lakhs of tons According to the Director of Agriculture's report the annual production of Bengal previous to 1941 was 85.5 lakh tons At that time we did not worry very much because rice and paddy used to come from all over the neighbouring provinces and from Burma in sufficient quantity and the department perhaps did not think it worth while to worry about it and in a false sense of complacency they concluded that export and import being equal 85.5 lakhs of tons, which is the average annual produce of Bengal, is also the real demand of Bengal I submit, Sir, that is not the case Had it been so then we would not have been faced with such a calamitous state of things today. So it was concluded that 85.5 lakhs of tons is the real consumption of Bengal and that the *per capita* consumption is not 344 lbs., but it must be within 280 to 290 lbs per year The calamity began when in the year 1942 there was a large demand of rice from other quarters and Bengal was ordered to give as much as it could In the year 1941 there was a bumper crop and the Director of Agriculture's figure is that the production was 99 lakhs of tons. So the Government of India naturally concluded from that figure that there is a large carry over to the extent of 14 to 15 lakhs of tons in the year 1942. That being the case they insisted that Bengal must supply Mauritius, Ceylon and other places in the Middle East and we had to comply with that because we had practically no other figure My submission, Sir, is, had the Hon'ble Minister taken pains to look into the archives of the Writers' Buildings he would have been satisfied at once that Bengal is a deficit province and he would have taken all sorts of precautions and would have also warned the people of Bengal to conserve what little they had already got.

The next thing that I want to place before the House is that by this food drive which had been undertaken by this Ministry of late they created disaster in the minds of the people psychologically. First of all, the

Ministry had allotted 10 chattacks for a working adult. You can very well imagine, Sir, that this is too insufficient a quota. By that allotment the poor agriculturists were thunder-struck, they were outwitted as to how it was possible for them to be engaged in grow more food with the ration allotted to them. They are asking, "how can we 'grow more food' with such small ration and even if we grow more food what is the utility if we ourselves are poorly fed and we cannot feed our dependants." So psychologically it has done a great harm to the countryside and to the agriculturists. I would appeal to the Hon'ble Minister that he should be practical so far as the agriculturists are concerned. Unless that misconception can be removed from the minds of the agriculturists I think no amount of planning in Writers' Buildings will help this country.

With these words, Sir, I hope that the Hon'ble Minister will take realities into consideration.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Mr Speaker, Sir, the debate on the food question that is being continued now is one of the most important events in the history of this country In fact, as it affects the lives of the millions of our countrymen, it is the one all-absorbing problem of the day and there must be a solution of the food problem, otherwise Bengal will be placed in a position where starvation would not only stalk the land but millions would die of hunger. Sir, I will not enter into the history as to how the present Ministry came to power by the mercy not of Providence but of Sir John Herbert I will only try to point out to this House how this Ministry specially my friend the Food Minister has not only bungled the whole food situation which has already assumed a serious proportion, but he has placed the whole country in the worst situation that one could imagine Before I speak about the present food situation, I would like to deal with the speech of Mr Saheed Suhrawardy which he delivered on the occasion of the special motion on the 10th March, 1943, during the Budget Session Sir, as you know, Mr. S Suhrawardy used to criticise the past Ministry not only severely, but he strove to hit it below the belt In order to make the position clear and in order to acquaint the House with the proper state of things as it stood before the present Ministry came to power, I shall quote a few passages of his speech which he delivered Speaking about the food question, he said, "We do not wish to deal with this problem as a party question. The matter is too important, too grave, too fundamental to be made a plaything of party politics" Sir, I am at one with him and I entirely agree with him But what has he done today? Is not the present Ministry exactly reverse of what he had stated then? Now, Sir, again he says, "the problem with which we are faced is not merely the problem of Calcutta. Already famine conditions are appearing in the rural areas. I have just come from a tour of Noakhali district Paddy is selling at Rs. 10 per maund and rice at Rs 15, in Sandwip it is Rs. 18 per maund and even at that is not available. This is the end of Phalgoon The murmurs are growing in volume, the people have begun to starve; what will happen to them in Jaistha and Ashar the most difficult months of the year for the agriculturists, Heaven alone knows" Now, Sir, judge for yourself, what is the position today. I shall make my comments at the end. I would now

only quote. He goes on "I cannot see, Sir, what possible advantage Government has gained by announcing that there was a shortage of 23 per cent. in this year's crop, without having taken steps to relieve that shortage." So, Mr. S. Suhrawardy found fault with the past Government for declaring the province to be short of rice by 23 per cent. He went on, "The food problem is one of the major problems of today. It affects everyone of us. It affects primarily the poor and the masses whose interests must always be paramount, far higher than any other consideration. Let us in considering this problem not be influenced by political sentiments but do our duty by the people and throw out a Government that has proved itself thoroughly incapable of handling the situation and place, if we can, the interests of the people above our own personal and political interests and then let us sit together and tackle the problem under a decent regime wedded to the welfare of the masses."

Now, Sir, this speech was delivered on the 10th March. On the 25th April, the present Ministry was installed in office. Immediately on the assumption of office Mr. Suhrawardy made a number of statements, the burden of which was that there was no shortage of rice in this province, and that all our troubles were due to hoarders and black-marketers and that he would pursue a relentless and ruthless policy to bring down the prices in no time. On the 4th of May, a Press-note was issued by the Civil Supplies Department which said amongst other things, "The Hon'ble Minister of Civil Supplies is of opinion that the prices now prevailing are purely speculative and bear no relation to real stock position. The Hon'ble Minister is convinced that any deficit this year can be fully met from the carry-over of 1941-42 crop, and as a result of steps which are being taken to rationalise consumption and to popularise the increased use of substitute food-grains, as well as the reduction in consumption due to the high price level. The public may therefore rest assured that there is no cause to fear any ultimate shortage of food-grains." On May 13, he spoke at a Press Conference and rebutted the prevalent idea that exports and the denial policy of the last year were responsible for the situation and added that these factors were exceedingly unimportant and have no relation to the stock position as it really was. Then on May 17th, he spoke again at a public meeting. He said, "One feature of the last Ministry's food policy was their insistence on shortage and the encouragement given to hoarders and black-marketers. There is no need for panic. Exports are nil, the imports from the Government of India are considerable. Army requirements account for a very small amount of rice, the number of evacuees is not such as can cause any dislocation; whatever the trade may do, the price must fall. To those who keep on hoarding, I give a word of warning and to you a message of hope that it will not be long before the price will crack." Early in June, the anti-hoarding drive began which embraced the whole province and exempted Calcutta and Howrah, the two very important areas. What was the motive behind this drive? The assumption was that there was sufficient rice in the province and that only the unearthing of the hoarded stocks would assure the people of this province of sufficient supply of rice. The slogan of the drive was "Don't grind the faces of the poor." Thereby he meant that it

was the belief of the Government that it was the only unsocial activities of the hoarders that were responsible for the prevailing acute distress, that stocks were just sufficient to meet the demand and all that was needed was to liquify them by an energetic and ruthless campaign, the procedure of which could never be imagined by any man of common sense. I don't deny, Sir, that there is no necessity of stock-taking. In fact the last Government of which I had the honour to be a member, tried to do its best to have a stock-taking throughout the province, but not in the manner in which the present Ministry has done it. But that was never allowed by the obstructionist policy of the Governor and the officials who dominated the Civil Supplies Department then.

The food drive began on the 7th of June and ended on the 20th of June. Subsequently he made another speech in the Rotary Club. I don't know in what mood he was then. He said, "He is no longer in a mood to dispute the existence of shortage in the supply of rice whatever its magnitude may be." Then he began to speak of inaccuracy in the census of food position. Some amount of inaccuracy is inevitable, but its significance should not be exaggerated It showed that he was realising that instead of shifting the responsibility of solving the food problem on the people, the Government should take upon itself the responsibility of solving the problem Then he announced a new method also; instead of controlled shops he will open 400 shops on behalf of the Government in the city itself and 400 in the suburbs; in all 800 shops to be opened by Government so that these Government shops will replace the controlled shops that are at present functioning. He invented another new thing. He said in the Rotary Club speech—"If free trade (in the Eastern Zone) was allowed full play, it would have brought about a better distribution of food stocks and solved the food problem." Mr. Suhrawardy forgets that a terrible war is raging and the province is affected, and with the shortage of supply, the difficulties of transport, free trade, of which he is the staunch advocate, has no meaning and can never effectively solve the food problem. There is another very great important thing which Mr. Suhrawardy found out that the present food situation and its complexities and the talk of supply from sister provinces must have given a rude shock to those who visualise India as an entity. I cannot understand how Mr. Suhrawardy who is a believer in Pakistan, could have the audacity to go and knock at the gates of the Hindusthan Ministries, I mean the provinces of Bihar and Orissa.

Now, Sir, I have given all these quotations from Mr. Suhrawardy's speeches before he became Minister and after his assumption of office, only to show the absurdity of his position, of his views and of his feelings about the people of the country, if any. Let me now try for a few minutes to describe the motives of the last anti-hoarding drive. Mr. Suhrawardy, as I have pointed out, was of the view that people in mufassil had hoards, and therefore he wanted to hunt up these hoards. As I have already stated, I am personally in favour of stock taking so far as food-grains are concerned, but the manner in which the drive was conducted and the method which was adopted to unearth the hoards were not only criminal but it showed utter lack of knowledge of the position of the Bengal cultivators, and their

difficulties. Sir, I am charging the Ministry with having conspired with British Imperialism to follow the dictates of the white masters. Mr. Amery cried from Whitehall "there is ample food in the country; it is only hoarders who are responsible for the present food position in Bengal". Delhi also echoed same sentiment. Sir John Herbert installed Sir Nazimuddin in power and Mr Suhrawardy became Food Minister. The drive went on to find out hoards What was the calculation? The basis of calculation was that an adult male should have 7½ chittacks of rice for 24 hours—no ration for children up to 4 years of age so that after the calculation is made, it might be shown that there is no shortage But let us look to the actual position of a villager. An ordinary peasant ordinarily takes three meals a day and would take half a seer of rice for each of the two major meals—midday and night meals and 4 chittacks early in the morning, before he goes out to work in the fields This will make a total of at least 1¼ seers a day In that place, the Food Minister calculated on the basis of 7½ chittacks per head per day Sir, I feel very strongly on this particular issue I say, Sir, emphatically that this was only a device or a cloak to shift the responsibility on the people In the statement which Mr Suhrawardy placed before the House the other day he stated, "The drive has achieved one great thing It has restored confidence amongst the poor and has driven the panic to the minds of the hoarders Frankly speaking, I am greatly satisfied with the result The heart of the people is sound and I hope I shall be pardoned for saying so I feel that it beats with us" I say, Sir, Mr Suhrawardy feels that the heart of the people is sound and that the heart beats with him But that was because he does not know their hearts; a man who has not the common sense, the ordinary information what an ordinary cultivator takes every day, can never truly gauge the situation that he has created by his anti-hoarding drive.

In another place he has stated, "There were two major factors that we have to deal with—one, the panic brought about by the insistence on shortage and the other, the greed brought about by speculative rise in prices". Sir, may I say that Mr Suhrawardy has created panic in the minds of the people by his anti-hoard campaign The ordinary peasants had no hoard. It might be that some big *jotdars* or some big agriculturists or some traders might have some hoards, but as there was no bar to Calcutta firms making free purchases of foodstuffs in the mufassil, whatever rice could be had was transferred to Calcutta as Calcutta was excluded from the operation of the drive. Sir, I may tell you that this House, and I believe the majority of the members of this House who come from the far off villages of Bengal, realise that there has been a panic created amongst the peasants of this unfortunate land to such an extent that they are even expressing reluctance to grow more food because they realise that even if they grow more food that food will be taken away from them on the basis of calculation at 7½ chittacks per head per day, which is not only dangerous but deceptive and criminal. Why should they then undergo the hardships and difficulties of cultivating their lands to grow more food? Recently, Sir, I issued a circular enquiring about the results of the drive as Secretary of the Nikhil Banga Krishak Proja Samity, about 1,000 in number, to the

different districts of Bengal. I have received in reply a large number of correspondence in which they have stated *inter alia* that those who started this anti-hoard drive campaign possibly have no heart, possibly they have no knowledge of the position of the cultivators of Bengal, otherwise they would not have calculated on the basis of 7½ chittacks per head per day. They have expressed their horror as the Government would seize the crop and why should they grow more food.

My friend, Mr. Suhrawardy, while speaking on the food situation in the month of Chaitra, apprehended mass starvation in Ashar. May I ask him, this is the end of Ashar, what will happen to the people of Bengal when the price of rice is ruling between Rs. 35 and 40? He apprehended mass starvation when the price was ruling between Rs. 14 and Rs. 15, and today after he has successfully driven out whatever rice the agriculturists, ignorant as they are, kept for the consumption of the family and of the labourers whom they would employ for agricultural purposes, after all those stocks have been taken away from them, what is going to happen to these agriculturists, who have nothing with them practically at the present moment? Mr. Suhrawardy found fault with the last Ministry for declaring shortage of rice in Bengal and creating panic by that. May I enquire what sort of panic he has created by his anti-hoarding campaign? The situation is certainly abnormal and for a one-party Ministry to try to solve that problem is a vain hope Mr. Fazlul Huq always said that he was certainly in favour, if necessary, of an all-party Government in the province so that all the major problems might be successfully tackled Undue advantage was taken of this view and this Ministry was installed in power with the result that in place of price ruling between Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 during the regime of the last Ministry, the price of rice is ruling between Rs. 35 and Rs. 40 per maund today. What a shame and utter barefacedness of the position of the Ministry which sits tight in the Treasury Bench! Sir, it is not for me to give this Ministry any formula to solve this problem. This Ministry never wanted our co-operation. The way in which we were treated—we were asked to participate in one or two conferences—was nothing short of a scandal. After Mr Suhrawardy had already issued instructions about his anti-hoarding drive, he placed before us his printed leaflets.

As I know the present position, people are dying of starvation, people have been reduced to skeletons and the more serious situation is that paddy seeds which the cultivators had, have all been eaten up and if within a very short time, rice is not supplied in large quantities to the mufassil areas,—because those areas have been denuded of rice on account of the drive and the drive only—there will not only be mass starvation and deaths, but chaos, disorders, riots, plunder and loot and all sorts of things that I cannot visualise with equanimity. Sir, as I have said, there was a motive behind the whole drive. Even stock taking which was the intention of the drive could not be taken as the people grew panicky. If a declaration had been made that it was the Government's intention to only take stock of the food-grains and that it was not the intention to seize any grain that would be in excess of actual requirements, I am absolutely certain that

there could have been a real stock taking. Sir, the Government took a great responsibility in declaring that 7½ chittacks was sufficient for an average adult in Bengal who either cultivates in the fields or works in factories. This may be the case with those who fill their bellies with bread, butter and all kinds of meat whether questionable or otherwise. But this could never be true for those who only take rice and *dal*. I am not in the habit of treating these things lightly. The Krishak Proja Parliamentary Party of which I happen to be the leader and the Nikhil Banga Krishak Samity which works in the countryside stand for the cause of the peasants of this country. The policy of the present Ministry in making this drive has done not only grave injustice but a cruel wrong to the peasants of this country.

Sir, I am not in the habit of throwing out challenges, but I am here standing before this House in all seriousness on behalf of the starving millions of peasants of the country and I throw out this challenge to the Food Minister and the Chief Minister that 7½ chittacks is not the basis of the calculation. Let there be a plebiscite of the people taken to know what is the real truth

Sir, before I sit down I will speak a few words about Mr. Suhrawardy's activities. Mr Suhrawardy has declared that he is satisfied with the result of this drive. I say, as I have already repeated before, the drive has been a failure The drive has created a panic in the minds of the people. It has not even succeeded in actual stock-taking as was desired by the Food Minister

Sir, before I conclude I express the same sentiment which Mr. Suhrawardy did in the concluding portion of his speech delivered on the 10th of March on the special motion. The food problem is serious—the situation at the present moment is so critical that it cannot be solved by a one-party Government. All the different parties should sit together and a representative Government of all parties should be allowed to function so that this very serious problem might be tackled successfully. Therefore, in conclusion, I would appeal in the name of all that is sacred and divine, in the name of the people of the entire province, in the name of the oppressed, suppressed and the depressed of the country, in the name of the starving millions of peasantry who are dying for a morsel of food today. I would appeal to the Indian members of this House to cast their votes in favour of the motion that is before the House.

Mr. B. MUKHERJEE : মাননীয় স্পীকার মহোদয়, যদিও আমি Congress bench থেকে বলছি, তাহলেও আমার বক্তৃতা বা বক্তব্য Congressএর থেকে কিছু পৃথক হবে। আমি Communistদের প্রতিনিধি এবং সেই হিসাবে প্রত্যেকটী বিষয় Communist Partyর দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী দিয়ে বিচার করে থাকি, সুতরাং বর্তমান সমস্যায়ও আমাকে সেই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী দিয়ে বিচার করতে হচ্ছে।

সচরাচর Communist Party রাজনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে কংগ্রেসের সঙ্গে একযোগে কাজ করে এবং মৌলিক সিদ্ধান্তে পার্থক্য না থাকায় কংগ্রেসের শৃঙ্খলা মেনেও নিজ সিদ্ধান্ত প্রচারের সাহায্য করবার অধিকার তার রহিয়াছে। এবং সেই হিসাবে যদি আপনাদের মতের পার্থক্য

থাকে, তাহলে তর্কের খাতিরে সেটুকু স্বীকার করলে কিছু অসুবিধা হবে না। কিন্তু, কোন বিশেষ সঙ্কট ক্ষেত্রে হয়তো সেইটুকু পার্থক্য রাখা প্রয়োজনই হবে। এবং আজকের যে খাদ্য-সঙ্কট, এযে ভয়ানক দেশব্যাপী দারুণ সঙ্কট সে বিষয়ে কোন সন্দেহ নাই। এবং এই বিষয়ে আমাদের পার্টির প্রতি আমি শ্রদ্ধা নিবেদন না করে পারি না। কারণ, তাঁরা আমাকে স্বাধীনতা দিয়েছেন এইভাবে আমার ব্যক্তিগত বা Communist Partyর প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে আমার যে মত তা ব্যক্ত করতে।

আজকে খাদ্য-সমস্যা যে গভীর সঙ্কটে উপস্থিত হয়েছে সে বিষয়ে আর অধিক বাগাড়ম্বরের প্রয়োজন নাইকো। মানুষ মাত্রেই, যার চোখ আছে সেই দেখতে পাচ্ছে, এবং তার চেয়েও বেশী অনুভব করতে পারছে যে ঘরে ঘরে খাদ্য নেই, আর খাদ্যের অভাবে মানুষের মরে যাওয়া খুব বিরল ব্যাপার নয়। এই ঘোরতর যে সঙ্কট, সেই সঙ্কটের মধ্যে যদি আমরা শুধু বারে বারে এই কথাই বলে যাই যে বাংলাদেশে খাদ্যের ঘাট্‌তি আছে, তাতে কোরে সমস্যার সমাধান কিছু হবে না। এ কথা কে না জানে যে বাংলাদেশে খাদ্যের ঘাট্‌তি হয়েছে, কিন্তু পুনঃ পুনঃ এর উপর emphasis দেওয়ার মানে, এর দ্বারা মানুষের মনে এই একটা হতাশা এনে দেওয়া যে, বর্ত্তমান খাদ্য-সমস্যার সমাধান হওয়া একেবারেই সম্ভব নয়। এখন প্রয়োজন হয়েছে, বাংলাদেশ হইতে খাদ্য-রপ্তানি বন্ধ করে, খাদ্য আমদানি করবার চেষ্টা করা। কিন্তু পূর্ব্ববর্ত্তী মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল এ বিষয়ে সফল হননি এবং বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলও যে বিশেষ সফল হয়েছেন তা নয়। বাহির থেকে খাদ্য আসবার অনেক বাধা আছে, এবং যতক্ষণ পর্য্যন্ত অন্ততঃ সর্ব্ব ভারতে এই রকম স্বার্থ বুদ্ধি প্রণোদিত আমলাতন্ত্রের শাসন থাকবে ততদিন পর্য্যন্ত এই সমস্যা সমাধান হওয়া সম্ভবপর নয়। এই রকমের অবস্থার মধ্যে যদিও চেষ্টা করা উচিত যাতে বাইরে থেকে প্রচুর পরিমাণে খাদ্য আমদানি করা যায়, কিন্তু তার চেয়েও বেশী প্রয়োজন আমাদের বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে, আমরা সমস্ত বাঙ্গালী একত্রিত হয়ে এই চেষ্টা করা যে আমাদের বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে যা অল্প কিছুও আছে তাই নিয়ে কি কোরে আমরা সমস্যাটির সমাধান করতে পারি। এবং তা করতে গেলে পর একমাত্র উপায় হচ্ছে সমস্ত খাদ্য,—যেখানে যা কিছু আছে সম্পূর্ণভাবে সেটাকে control করা এবং strict rationing করা,—কারণ, rationing মানে এ নয় যে কিছু লোক যেমন খেয়ে থাকেন তেমনি খাবেন আর কিছু লোক অনাহারে থাকবেন, এ হোতে পারে না। তার জন্য, প্রয়োজন হচ্ছে, যেখানে যা কিছু আছে সম্পূর্ণভাবে তার উপর control এবং এই কর্ত্তৃত্ব নিয়ে যোগ্যতা এবং প্রয়োজন অনুসারে সকলকে বিতরণ করা। বিশেষতঃ শ্রমিক কৃষককে কিছু বেশী দিতে হবে, এই জন্য যে তাঁরা শ্রমসাধ্য কাজ করেন। এ বিষয়ে একটী সুনির্দ্দিষ্ট পরিকল্পনা নিয়ে কার্য্যে অগ্রসর হওয়া উচিত, সমস্ত জনসাধারণের ভিতর যাতে উপযুক্তভাবে খাদ্য বণ্টন করে দেওয়া যায়। কিন্তু, এত বড় একটা drastic ব্যাপার করতে গেলে সে ব্যাপারটা কোন বিশেষ মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল বা একলা গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষে সম্ভব নয়। সমস্ত বাংলাদেশব্যাপী সম্মিলিত জনসাধারণের ঐক্যবদ্ধ সহযোগিতা ও চেষ্টার ভিতর দিয়েই এত বড় একটা ব্যাপার সম্পন্ন করা সম্ভব, এবং সেই দিক দিয়েই আমদের চলতে হবে। এত বড় যে একটা ব্যাপার সমস্ত বাংলাদেশের লোককে ঐক্যবদ্ধ করা—এ সম্ভব মাত্র দুটি প্রতিষ্ঠানের পক্ষে—Congress ও League. কংগ্রেস এবং লীগ এই দুটীর একটীকে বাদ দিলে বাংলার সমস্ত জনসাধারণের এক, একটা বিপুল অংশ বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে যায়। যখন আমরা বলি সর্ব্ব ভারতীয় ঐক্য, তখন আমরা বলি না লীগ ছাড়া ঐক্য বা কংগ্রেস ছাড়া ঐক্য। এবং আমরা বলি কংগ্রেস এবং লীগের যে

বন্ধনী তার মধ্যে সমস্ত দলকে আসতে হবে। আজকে ভারতে যে বহু পার্টি আছে তাদের ভিত্তি হলো কংগ্রেস এবং লীগের বিরোধিতার মধ্যে। যদি আজকে কংগ্রেস এবং লীগের মধ্যে ঐক্য স্থাপন হয়, তা'হলে এই বন্ধনীর মধ্যে অন্যান্য সমস্ত পার্টি আসতে বাধ্য, এবং যাঁরা আসবেন না, তাঁরা হবেন এদেশকে বিচ্ছিন্নকারী পার্টি। অর্থাৎ তারা দেশের মধ্যে বিভেদ সৃষ্টি করে বলে আলাদা হয়ে যাবে। সুতরাং সেই হিসাবে আমি মনে করি যে প্রত্যেকটী প্রস্তাব বিচার করে দেখা উচিত, যে এই সমস্ত প্রস্তাবগুলি আমাদিগকে মিলনের দিকে, না বিরোধের দিকে নিয়ে চলেছে? আজকে খাদ্য-সমস্যা সম্পর্কে যতগুলি প্রস্তাব আছে এই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী থেকে বিচার করে দেখেছি, তা থেকে দেখেছি প্রস্তাবগুলি সমস্তই আমাদিগকে বিরোধের দিকে নিয়ে চলেছে। Congressএর প্রস্তাব ছাড়া আর সমস্ত প্রস্তাবের ভিতর দিয়ে মূল কথা বলা হচ্ছে, এই যে, বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী কতখানি ব্যর্থ হয়েছে। কতকগুলি concrete suggestion দেবার পরেও কি সমস্ত জায়গায় এই কথাই focus হোয়েছে যে বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডল কতখানি ব্যর্থ হয়ে পড়েছে। এবং এর alternative হচ্ছে এই মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলের প্রতি অনাস্থা আনা, এবং তারপরের alternative হচ্ছে, কংগ্রেস যখন মন্ত্রিত্ব গ্রহণ করতে রাজী হচ্ছেন না, তখন পূর্ব্বতন মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলকে ফিরিয়ে আনতে হবে।

আমরা যারা জনসাধারণের মধ্যে নিকটতমভাবে কাজ করি, আমরা যারা food-queueএর মধ্যে কাজ করি, এবং গ্রামে গ্রামে জনরক্ষা সমিতি কোরে গত বছর থেকে খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধান করবার চেষ্টা করে আসছি, আমরা দেখেছি শুধু সরকারের দ্বারা এই সমস্যা সহজে সমাধান হতে পারে না। গত মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীও ব্যর্থ হয়েছিল এই খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধান করতে। অতএব মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলের অদল-বদল বা হেরফের দ্বারা এর সমাধান হতে পারে না। এ জিনিষটাকে কংগ্রেস খানিকটা নিরপেক্ষ দৃষ্টিতে দেখতে পারেন, কেন না তাঁরা গতবার মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীতে ছিলেন না। আজ মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর বিরুদ্ধে যত প্রস্তাব আনা হোয়েছে তার দ্বারা, আমরা শুধু দেশকে বিরোধিতার দিকে নিয়ে চলেছি। প্রত্যেকটী প্রস্তাবই নিয়ে চলেছে আমাদের দেশকে বিরোধিতার দিকে। কংগ্রেস ও লীগে এবং লীগ ও হকের বিরোধিতার ভিত্তির উপর এমন কোরে একটা দুই পক্ষের বিরোধিতা সৃষ্টি হোচ্ছে, যার ফলে সমস্ত বাংলাব্যাপি দুইটী বিরোধী শ্রেণী তৈরী হচ্ছে, এবং প্রায় সাম্প্রদায়িক বিরোধের মধ্যে এই জিনিষটা দাঁড়িয়ে যাচ্ছে। এই অবস্থায় আমার মনে হয় যে, কংগ্রেসী প্রস্তাবের ভিতর যদিও কোন একটা বিশেষ মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলকে নিন্দা করা হয় নাইকো, কিন্তু, তার মধ্যেও সামান্য বিরোধিতা থাকার দরুণ অন্যান্য বিরোধী পক্ষ মনে করবে, এটাও বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলের প্রতি no-confidence, এবং সেই সুযোগ নেবার জন্য সমস্ত বিরোধী দলের পক্ষ থেকে, আজকে বাংলাদেশে যে লীগ-বিরোধী একটা ঐক্যের চেষ্টা চলেছে তার যেমন আমরা প্রতিবাদ করি, তেমনি শুধু লীগের সঙ্গে যে সহযোগিতা তাও হবে কংগ্রেস-বিরোধী ঐক্য, সেখানেও আমরা প্রতিবাদ করি। যেমন Congress-majority করবার চেষ্টা হোচ্ছে কংগ্রেস-বিরোধী Provinceএ, সেখানে সেটাকে আমরা প্রতিহত করবার চেষ্টা করি, তেমনি লীগ-মেজরিটী প্রদেশে লীগ-বিরোধী ঐক্যের যে চেষ্টা তারও আমরা প্রতিবাদ করি। (A voice : কোরবে কারা?) জনসাধারণ। সেই হিসাবে আমি মনে করি বর্ত্তমানে food driveএর মধ্যে কথঞ্চিৎ সাফল্য যে আছে, এ বিষয়ে কোন সন্দেহ নাই; এবং যখন সমস্ত বিরোধী দলই বলছেন হাওড়া এবং কলিকাতাকে এই driveএর মধ্যে আনা উচিত, তখন তার দ্বারা প্রমাণিত হোচ্ছে anti-hoarding drive policyকে প্রত্যেক পার্টি সমর্থন করেন। সমস্ত Houseএর মত এটা একটা

successful policy, তার মানে হচ্ছে—anti-hoarding policy কে support করে, সমর্থন করে তাকে successful করতে চাইছেন Houseএর প্রত্যেকটী পার্টি। আমি আশা করি এই মাসের মধ্যে, কলিকাতা এবং হাওড়া এই anti-hoarding driveএর মধ্যে এসে পড়বে। (Voice : No.) বর্ত্তমানে, আমাকে অন্ততঃ এ বিষয়ে নিরপেক্ষ নীতি গ্রহণ করতে হোচ্ছে এই জন্য যে, এই প্রস্তাবের বিরোধিতা করতে গেলে, বিরোধিতা না হয় করা হল, কিন্তু সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কংগ্রেসের বিরোধিতা করা হয়, ও কংগ্রেস এবং লীগের যে ঐক্য সেই ঐক্যের প্রতি পথ প্রশস্ত করা হয় নাকো বরং আরো জটিল করা হয়। এবং আমি নিজে বিশ্বাস করি যে গ্রামে গ্রামে জনসাধারণ আজ কংগ্রেস-লীগের সম্মিলিত ঐক্যের ভিতর দিয়া জনসাধারণের খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধানের যে চেষ্টা চলেছে সেখানেই হ'ল ঐক্যের ভিত্তি। "Top"এ মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলীর ভিতর যে ঐক্য—সে ঐক্য নয়। কংগ্রেস-লীগের ভিতর দিয়ে যে ঐক্য স্থাপিত হবে, তা শুধু আমাদের খাদ্য-সমস্যা সমাধান করবে না, ভারতবর্ষে যে national crisis চলেছে সেটারও সমাধান নিয়ে আসবে, এবং নিয়ে আসবে আমাদের জাতীয় নেতাদের মুক্তি, স্থাপিত হবে National Government, এবং তার দ্বারা পরিপূর্ণভাবে সম্পন্ন হবে আমাদের দেশরক্ষার কার্য্য।

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Mr Speaker, Sir, the subject under discussion is not only an important one but a very serious one too. The situation is indeed an abnormal one due not to local conditions but to the conditions prevalent in the whole world today by which everybody is more or less affected. On the one hand therefore the situation calls for a strong and determined action and on the other it is necessary that those who are entrusted with this work should have a sympathetic consideration and should be assisted by useful suggestions so that they may guide their activities along right lines. There is no room therefore for any caustic and destructive criticism, nor is this the time for introducing political or party considerations.

So far as the subject is concerned, no less than 19 resolutions were tabled out of which 9 have actually been moved on the floor of the House. Allegations of various kinds have been made tending to suggest that the present Government of Bengal are solely and wholly responsible for everyone of the items of difficulty and misfortune which have happened in this province. Suggestions have also been sought to be given as to how the situation can be tackled. If one were to analyse these suggestions along with the reasons which have been advanced in the course of the debate, it will appear that these are so much at variance with one another that one will surely find himself at sea, should he be seriously called upon to accept all the same.

Within the very short time at my disposal it is not my purpose to deal with the resolutions on their merits. I shall content myself on this occasion to speak in general terms with regard to one or two of the subjects which appear to me to be somewhat of an important character.

Much has been said about the shortage of food-grains specially of rice in Bengal and suggestion has been made that it should be declared a famine area. I do not know how a declaration of that character will solve the difficulty. The situation is well known and such steps as are possible for any human institution have been sincerely and seriously undertaken. There may be shortage now in the country but there could not have been any shortage in the months of January and February immediately after the harvest of the *aman* crop. We know however that there was a cry of shortage raised in January if not earlier causing an unprecedented panic in the minds of the innocent people in the interior, resulting in hoarding as far as possible in many instances. So far as we know, no attempt was even then made as to how people could help themselves to get out of this difficulty beyond asking the superior authorities to make a declaration that there was a shortage in this province. It is a matter of gratification that measures are now being taken in the right direction advising and guiding people to utilise their vacant lands attached to their homesteads at least for the purpose of growing vegetables and such other food crops.

In the next place it is alleged that the prices of rice and other articles of food have gone very high and that nothing has been done to arrest the same. We have had historical discussion of statistics in the past two days. It may be recalled however that the prices of rice and other foodstuffs were on the rise from January, 1942 We were not then informed if any step was at all taken to stop its progress in this upward direction. It is a matter of elementary principle that when the producer of rice has got to purchase cloth, oil and other necessities of life at a much higher price, he should have some price for his rice as well. These rises of price cannot be said to have injured a true agriculturist who grows his own rice; but since he is only one of the links of the social chain he has got to be kept under control so that he may not beak away from the main chain. It is for this reason that the prices should be brought under some control as soon as it is feasible to do so. These high prices have affected the middle classes whose income is limited and the landless labourers who have to depend upon manual labour for their food and the earning under present conditions is insufficient to give them a square meal. These prices have therefore affected those following some sort of parasitic occupation depending on others for their maintenance and it is correct that my profession of law has been hit the hardest in the present times.

These high prices of rice again cannot be said to be an unmixed evil; for, I have had reports from many places where the agriculturists have utilised these high prices in paying up their dues to the landlord up to the last farthing and also in clearing up their old debts to their *mahajans*.

The real difficulty does not seem to be so much in the rise of prices of foodstuff which must be of a temporary character and which has affected the whole world but it is more or less due to not being able to find occupation and employment for the people who have not got much of the lands for their maintenance.

It has been said that Bengal has supplied occupation and food to millions of non-Bengalees but she has not been able to solve the problem of the children of the soil. It is a great pity if things are allowed to continue even now in the old fashion. One of the reasons as it has struck me is that the illiterate Bengalee is hopelessly home-sick. He would not stir out of his home and village even if he is offered some occupation at a distance. I think attempts should be made in this direction to see that able-bodied men find occupation as it suits them so that they do not become unnecessary burden upon the society and the Government.

A large amount of time of the House has been spent in dilating upon the statement that food drive has not been undertaken in Calcutta and Howrah because there are a large number of mills under the control of the non-Bengalee employers. Mr. Kennedy was good enough to say that this should have also been undertaken so that people would have known of their own requirements and that they would have got some assistance as to how they could help themselves. I wish those of the honourable gentlemen, who addressed very severe language to a few European employers of labour, had known of the large quantity of labour they have under them. These employers are not only Europeans but there are a large number of Indians as well. I am not in a position to speak on this subject with any authority but I can certainly speak about the collieries and the large volume of labour employed by them. It may be a piece of news to the House what the three Associations connected with these collieries—Indian Mining Association, Indian Mining Federation, Indian Colliery Owners' Association—have done to feed the millions of labour employed under them at a very great loss to them; for, besides paying their daily wages, each of the labourers is supplied with his weekly ration at a very concessional rate and the employers pay the balance themselves. It is one thing to say that all that is expected has not been done; but it is entirely different to say that nothing has been done.

A cry has been raised even now in the course of this debate that all these calamities as are prevalent in this province are due to the fact that there is no National Ministry functioning in Bengal today. I never expected that honourable members of this House could have been so short-sighted as not to realise that this problem is not only a problem of this province but it is a problem of India as well and perhaps of countries all over the world.

Again I do not know what a National Ministry means for I do not find it defined anywhere nor has any definition been attempted even in the course of this debate. If it means however a Ministry, who feels being sandwiched between the head of the administration and the permanent officials, if it means again a Ministry who does not carry conviction with the public, if it means a Ministry who does not command respect from anybody, if it means a Ministry who have no confidence in themselves, if it means a Ministry who have no regard for the people nor for themselves, if it means a Ministry who seek to introduce personal considerations in the affairs of the public administration and in short if it is one, a description of whose achievements and activities has been given in the five statements,

one made in February last and the other four made on the 5th July last, we would only pray to God Almighty that He might save us and this unfortunate province from such a National Ministry. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Government Party Benches.)

It has to be admitted that a Government is composed of human beings and they are not all powerful nor even omniscient. One must admit that the steps so far taken in the course of the last two months and a half by the present Government are not of a small order. They have, as it appears not only from reports but from facts, with the assumption of offices at a very difficult time, not shirked their responsibilities but have tried to solve the difficulties that are before them as best as they possibly can. They are assisted at least in the Department of Civil Supplies by a body of officers of His Majesty's Government most of whom are known to be honest, industrious, loyal and keen to do their very best in serving this province.

I feel therefore that the suggestions made through the 9 resolutions are varied so much from one another that it is impossible for one to act upon the same. I trust however that Government will be good enough to consider these suggestions and make the very best use of those of them which may be made use of in view of the present circumstances. We have known the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Civil Supplies of the Government of Bengal for years now Personally I have had an opportunity of working with him in close quarters for 4 years and 8 months and although there were many occasions when we could not see eye to eye, still I have always had the highest admiration for his courage and industry and for his anxiety to do his very best in the midst of difficult circumstances. I thank my honourable friend Dr. Sanyal when he says that political controversies should be kept aside at a time like this though the language of his resolution is different from what he has said on the floor of the House. At a time, when quick action is necessary, no Committee can be of any avail.

The Ministry are also anxious to have discussions with the leaders of the various groups of this House as they have already done on several occasions in the past. In this view of the matter, I feel that this is not the time to raise any acrimonious discussion but to help those, who have undertaken responsibilities, in the discharge of their duties. I do not think therefore that the resolutions, even if any one is accepted, will solve this real problem.

In this view of the matter I have to oppose all the resolutions. (Applause from the European and Government Party Benches.)

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not the first food debate we have in this Assembly, nor is it likely to be the last, for as I see it the question of food is likely to engage our attention for at least the period of the war and for some time afterwards. But the fact remains that this by far the most important problem of today, is so serious that I have been greatly distressed during the past ten days by the political activities which can only have the effect of making a solution of the problem more difficult through diverting attention and energies to matters of relatively much less importance.

The food situation in this province has been deteriorating for well over a year, and the fact that now in the middle of July, 1943, it is not worse than it is, almost gives me hope that we may soon be able to see round the corner. Anxious and difficult months undoubtedly lie ahead however and much must be done to ensure that the position does not get out of hand. I personally have never subscribed to the belief that grain shortage is so acute as to reproduce the circumstances of previous famine years. But scarcity there is, and the present fantastic prices for rice have produced a price famine which is having the most disastrous effects upon certain classes of people in Bengal. Starvation already exists in many parts of the province and deaths from this cause have undoubtedly already occurred. Only the strongest measures can prevent conditions from becoming worse.

As far back as September last year, it could be seen that new and sinister features were already appearing in the difficult food situation.

Standing crops of paddy were then being purchased at prices which meant subsequent high prices for rice and the full significance of this entry of speculation into the staple food crop of the province was neither realised nor dealt with by the Government of the day. I hope, Sir, that the present Government is bearing this in mind and that the object lessons provided by other provinces in India in controlling forward dealings in crops are not being lost upon the present Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies. No attempt to control the main *aman* crop last year was undertaken and little has been done to obtain control of the forthcoming *aus* crop. There is still time, however, and this is important, to take steps to control the forthcoming *aman* crop on which so much depends in Bengal during the forthcoming year.

Sir, when this subject was debated in the February-March session, our complaint against the Ministry of the day was that they had failed to apply their minds to the food problem or make any genuine effort to tackle it. I notice that the same accusations are now being made in the special cut motions by the Opposition against the present Ministry. But we as an independent party can see a difference——

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Question, question!

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: There is no question.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: We do question that.

Mr. DAVID HENDRY: It is for me to say whether we as an independent party—and I reiterate that we are an independent party—we can discern a difference in the manner in which the respective Ministries have tackled this problem. Enough has probably not been done by either of them. But the most prejudiced observer cannot deny that the present Minister of Civil Supplies has not only applied his mind to the problem but has done so with energy and imagination. It is too early yet to raise the question of confidence or no confidence in the present Government in their

efforts to solve this food problem—they have only been in office just over two months—and time will show how effective their steps will be. The Hon'ble Minister has been left a terrible legacy by his predecessors but in the short time he has been in office he has in our opinion been doing everything possible to mobilise the internal resources of the province and to secure supplies from other provinces. These efforts have not yet been completely successful; nor have they shown any substantial results so far (cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition Benches), but I think that they will and we think that the Hon'ble Minister should have the whole-hearted support and confidence of this House in continuing his efforts. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: For failure!)

Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy's food drive may not have achieved all that we should have liked but it has probably achieved all that could be expected and it was certainly an essential preliminary step in dealing with the situation. Accurate agricultural statistics in this province are unfortunately not available and I should like, if I have time, to return to that question later. But although the effect of the drive can have produced nothing in the nature of accurate statistics it must have provided valuable information about the conditions throughout the country which can form the foundation of future measures in the rural areas. Although all the food-grains which have gone underground may not have been revealed, it seems clear that the position of food supplies up to the end of this year is very serious indeed and that it will be necessary for Government to organise the deficit areas, both urban and rural, on a relief basis. This, Sir, will require a very extensive organisation throughout the country and I should be grateful if the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies would tell us whether anything so far has been done in this direction. Non-official agencies will of course have to be used to a large extent but it is essential that there should be a nucleus of Government distributing centres to guard against total breakdown and as a check upon other agencies. While, Sir, we consider that the food drive was sound and imaginative, we, in common with many others in this House, are at a loss to understand why Calcutta and Howrah were excluded. It may have been for administrative reasons or it may have been for a subtle purpose which has not yet been divulged. But I would strongly urge that this exclusion be terminated at once and that Calcutta and Howrah be thoroughly combed before this month is out. There is no time for delay in this matter. This is the time when such a survey within the Calcutta and Howrah area should be done and in that case I believe that the previous exclusion can be turned to very good advantage indeed. Before this drive takes place within the Callutta and Howrah area, I would also suggest that it is highly desirable that we should be provided with the definition of what hoarding is and what profiteering is. Without that, the drive will fail to yield results which otherwise might be expected of it.

So far as imports of foodstuffs from other provinces are concerned, the main difficulties appear to have been transport and the very frequent changes in the policy of the Central Government of India itself. I see from the papers today that the free trade system is again going to be jettisoned and

I consider that a firmer control of the provinces is the better policy of the two. But we shall have to wait and see how that policy is carried out. No policy unless it is firmly and efficiently carried out can be of any benefit whatsoever.

Transport is, as we all know, a very major difficulty in these days and we would be very interested to know what action the present Government is prepared, or is proposing, to take regarding transport from the Punjab which so far has been unable to send us such wheat and rice as has been promised. If, as has been stated, the quantity of food-grains to be brought into this province will amount to 200 lakhs of maunds, handling and transport of this large quantity will in itself be a major task and it would appear that it would be necessary to have a transport section in the Civil Supplies Department to carry this out efficiently. Transport is a very difficult job and not one which can be handled without a separate individual who knows what he is doing in that matter. I should be grateful to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies if he would tell us whether he has this very important matter in hand.

So far as supplies from other provinces are concerned and so far as their transportation into this province is concerned I hope that Government will keep up their pressure upon the Central Government for this province of Bengal stands in a class by itself. It has a very special case to put forward and it is entitled to the highest priorities both as regards supplies and transport to bring them here. Situated as we are with the enemy on our borders and with a large portion of the heavy war industries of India within our borders, Bengal is entitled to much more assistance than any other province in India and I have no doubt that the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies is making full use of this argument in our present difficulties.

Suggestions have been made in this House that the Government are in the hands of large employers who have received special assistance in obtaining food supplies for their labour. This, Sir, is not so and in fact we consider that the very opposite is the case. From January to April this year member firms of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce did receive small supplies from Government and they were in fact unable to buy for themselves in the districts at all because of the movement control enforced by Government. At the beginning of June, Chamber members were told by Government that they must fend for themselves and, in the second place, they were compelled to reduce the ration they allow to their labour. There is no special tenderness for employers and their labour in these particular actions and the sudden reduction in ration without any previous notice did in fact cause a certain amount of labour unrest. As was pointed out by Mr. Kennedy yesterday employers held stocks for their labour for 4½ weeks only, at the end of June; the supply is now less and at no time, as was also pointed out, has there been any hoarding for profit. In fact, in buying rice in the open market at 13 annas per seer and selling to their labour at 3 annas per seer, they have undoubtedly provided a valuable check on the level of prices. And nowhere, not even in Mr. Suhrawardy's white paper, have I seen any appreciation of the public service which these employers have done

in supplying cheap food to their workers, numbering 600,000 in all on a strictly rationed basis. Sir, I maintain that sufficient appreciation of the public service done by these employers has not yet been voiced in any quarter and I should like to have some modicum of appreciation from the Minister in charge of Civil Supplies himself. Food-grain is distributed by employers on a very strict rationing basis of 2½ seers per week for ordinary industries and 3½ seers for heavier industries. If and when rationing comes into force in Calcutta, and we in this party consider very strongly that the whole of Calcutta should be rationed as early as possible, I hope when this rationing does commence, that this valuable rationing organisation which has been in operation for so many months and has already gained much experience will be made full use of.

Sir, so far we have been mainly concerned with short-term policy for meeting our immediate needs; these, of course, are undoubtedly the most pressing necessities of the moment, and the responsibilities of this Government in providing for these immediate needs are very great indeed and have already been sufficiently urged in this House. The food drive has evidently made available an immediate surplus of seven to eight million maunds; but that, after all, represents only about 3 per cent of the total annual provincial consumption, i.e., about ten days' needs for the province and there must be somewhere, I still maintain, very large stocks of rice which have not been unearthed, but I am not endeavouring to cast aspersions upon the food drive because it has undoubtedly served a useful purpose in many other directions besides giving us seven or eight million maunds of rice. But when the minimum requirements have been met, as, I hope, they will, the long-term policy is one which requires very urgent and immediate attention to prevent a recurrence of the present lamentable conditions. An early decision, I have already suggested, Sir, is required, with regard to the treatment to be accorded to the next *aman* crop. As regards the *aman* crop it appears to me that there are three alternatives which are open to Government. Firstly, they might allow trade to carry on without restriction; secondly, they might buy up the whole crop; or, thirdly, Government might confine themselves to buying surpluses, leaving sufficient for local requirements. Obviously Government do not possess the necessary machinery for buying up the whole crop, and in any case it is highly desirable that the trade should be allowed to function as far as possible. In view of past experience, however, strict control of that trade is equally essential and everything must be done to reduce opportunities for speculation which have already brought such serious trouble.

It will be necessary for Government through their own purchasing organisation to secure large stocks in order to ensure supplies for urban and other deficit areas and to ensure the efficient working of any rationing scheme which may be introduced in these areas. There is no use introducing a rationing scheme without supplies to ration and it is incumbent upon the Government to provide itself with surplus stocks which will enable it to put a reasonable rationing scheme into effect.

With this should go, as was pointed out yesterday, strict enforcement of the Food Grains Control Order and the introduction of really effective measures to deal with hoarders and profiteers.

The Central Government's decision not to attempt for the time being to enforce maximum prices does not absolve this Government from the responsibility of dealing with these profiteers and hoarders in a severe manner, and the Central Government has in fact urged Provincial Governments to deal ruthlessly with such people. Nowhere have we seen or heard of anything like deterrent penalities being imposed on those who had been convicted of hoarding or profiteering. In most cases, it would appear that the wrong person is being punished, namely, the small dealer, and that the larger operators have managed to escape. I would suggest, Sir, that profiteering offences should be made cognisable and should be tried by special tribunals, punishment by imprisonment without the option of fine being generally imposed.

Sir, I should like to return for a moment to statistics if you will kindly grant me a little more time. Unfortunately, Sir, there is in this province no agricultural statistics of any value whatsoever. The Permanent Settlement is largely responsible for the inferiority of our statistics compared with those of other provinces, but that is no reason why correct statistical figures should not be obtained and no reason why we should continue to labour under a permanent disability. We have found in the present crisis that the lack of these statistics has placed us in an awkward position which it would have been easier to remedy if accurate figures had been available both to the previous Government as well as to this one. The data on which our statistics are based at present are faulty in the extreme and no statistics can be better than the materials upon which they are based. Extensive crop-cuttings are, as I believe, already being made, and I should like to know what information has been obtained from these crop-cuttings and in particular what steps are being taken to set up a reliable bureau of statistics.

Finally, Sir, and before I conclude, I should like to refer briefly to the proposal which has been made in several motions that Government should constitute a committee consisting of all parties to deal with this food problem. No one is more anxious than I have been to see an all-party Ministry, and we have urged repeatedly from these benches that an all-party Ministry is desirable and should be formed. That unfortunately has not been possible either for political or, it may be personal, reasons and it does not appear to be practicable now. In no circumstances, Sir, can any self-respecting Government abrogate its functions to a committee. It is essential that the Government of today should deal with this problem and it can not divest itself of this responsibility. Therefore, I would appeal to the members of this House of all parties to co-operate with the present Government to overcome our present difficulties.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to accord my whole-hearted support to the resolution moved by my esteemed friend Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri and so effectively supported by him with

arguments, facts and figures. He has also put forward in his resolution some sound constructive suggestions which, if put into execution, will go a long way to appease the hunger of this famished province.

Sir, sitting through the long and weary hours listening to this debate one's memory naturally travels back to the scenes which were enacted in this chamber on the identical problem three months ago. With a few significant exceptions the actors have changed places: those who have not changed their places have completely changed their tunes. Last night, on the 13th July, my friend Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty was loud in his declamation against the last Ministry. It was on the 10th March last that Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty was pleased to express himself in the following terms:—

আজ সমস্ত ভারতবর্ষের যাঁরা প্রভু তাঁদের দৃষ্টি নিবদ্ধ বাংলার প্রতি। এক বাংলাদেশের মন্ত্রিসভাই জনমতের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত এবং জনসাধারণের প্রতিনিধি দ্বারা পরিচালিত। বাংলাদেশের এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট লোকের চক্ষে হেয় হয়ে থাক, এদেশের জনসাধারণ অপদার্থ, অকেজো এবং লোক-মতের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে একটা fiasco সেটা প্রমাণ হয়ে যাক এবং জগতের সামনে প্রমাণিত হোক যে বাংলায় এমন কোন ব্যক্তি নাই যিনি সেখানকার গভর্ণমেণ্ট সুষ্ঠুরূপে পরিচালিত করতে পারেন। এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে এ কথাও প্রমাণিত হয়ে যাক যে, এদেশ চিরকাল স্বৈরাচারই মানতে অভ্যস্ত। স্বাধীনতার পথে যাবার এরা উপযুক্ত নয়। * * * * আজকে কি বুঝতে হবে যে, একজন ইস্পাহানী সাহেব বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রীর স্থানে মন্ত্রী হলেই বাংলার এই নিদারুণ অন্ন-সমস্যার সমাধান হবে? কোটি কোটি বুভুক্ষিত নরনারী পেট পুরে খেতে পাবে? বাংলার লোকের মুখে হাসি ফুটে উঠবে, তাদের কান্না থেমে যাবে? তাদের বুক, মুখ, সুখ ও সৌভাগ্য উথলে উঠবে? তা যদি হবার হতো বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিসভা ও তাঁদের সমর্থকদের পক্ষ হয়ে আমি দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে, আন্তরিকতার সঙ্গে এই আশ্বাস সানন্দে দিতে পারি যে, বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী এই মুহূর্ত্তেই পদত্যাগ করতে প্রস্তুত আছেন। * * * * সিদ্দিকী সাহেবও বেশ গম্ভীর চালে বক্তৃতা করেছেন, যদিও তার সবটাই দায়িত্বহীন উক্তিতেই ভরা।

* * * * কিন্তু সিদ্দিকী ও ইস্পাহানী সাহেব এই অবস্থার সুযোগ নিয়ে রাজনৈতিক জুয়া খেলতে চান।

That was Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty only three months ago. I would not have troubled the House with an extract from a speech made by Mr. Narendra Narayan Chakrabarty had it not furnished a typical background of some of the actors in the scenes which are now being enacted in the present session.

On the same day, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy bitterly complained in course of his speech that in the Noakhali district paddy was selling at Rs. 10 per maund and rice at Rs. 15. At Sandwip it was Rs. 18 per maund and even that also was not available. This he described as famine conditions appearing in the rural areas. Rice is selling today at an average price of Rs. 35 per maund in the rural areas and can hardly be obtained in the market. The Home Minister has drawn a gloomy picture of riots, looting and dacoities in the countryside owing to the appalling food situation in the country. Calcutta, in his view, has become a city of beggars. Hunger, disease,

pestilence and crime are stalking the land. Mr. Suhrawardy and his august colleagues are flourishing is ministerial glory amidst famine, starvation and ruin.

The one panacea for all these evils prescribed by Mr. Suhrawardy and his supporters during the last debate was the immediate termination of the Fuzlul Huq Ministry; and he went on canvassing for the support and the verdict of the Assembly. That verdict was denied to him more than once by the Assembly. But his importunities did not go unheeded in other quarters. On the 24th April the new Ministry came into office with the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy as Civil Supplies Minister. They have been accorded all possible facilities to carry out their task. They have attempted to secure supplies from within the province by what has been described as the anti-hoarding drive. They have been given immense facilities for obtaining supplies from outside the province by the Government of India who have lifted the provincial barriers.

Sir, when the last Ministry insisted on a food inventory being taken throughout the province in the course of a fortnight by mobilising the man-power of the Government, they were met with the reply that Government officers could not be diverted from important war work.

So far as supplies from other provinces are concerned, the Government of India had just promised to come to the rescue of Bengal and food-grains were about to move from some of the provinces through the agency of the Government of India when the last Ministry went out of office. The benefit of those negotiations was reaped by the present Ministry when the provincial barriers were lifted soon after they took office.

Then again with regard to the personnel of the Directorate of Civil Supplies, the present Minister has got under him from the Director downwards a team of officials the like of whom the last Ministry had repeatedly asked for and had been repeatedly denied. Mr. Suhrawardy has taken credit for the colossal amount of work which the Ministry have put in and has claimed that the present Ministry are doing their best. Is it not a sad and miserable confession that even their very best has been wholly inadequate to the task?

The question naturally arises why they have failed They have failed because, as was to be expected, the party politician in Mr. Suhrawardy has got the better of the administrator—with apologies to Mr. Hendry who has pleaded for a non-party approach to the question. Mr. Suhrawardy seems to have conceived the idea that the tragic food situation in the province and the resources of Government placed at his disposal should be exploited for the purpose of glorifying himself and his Party as the new liberator and the new saviour of Bengal. What else can explain his action in hatching and launching upon a province-wide scheme keeping the different party leaders completely in the dark? The only answer, according to the Muslim League Food Minister of Bengal, is that no other Party should have any hand in approaching the people of Bengal in this crisis and that no other Party should have any hand in the setting up of packed food committees upon which the Food Minister has laid so much stress.

Take again the question of supplies from Orissa. Who is to be the sole agent of the Muslim League Minister? Why, it must be a firm which, according to Mr. Suhrawardy, could deliver the goods, their sympathy for the Muslim League being well known. Mr. Suhrawardy in a confessional mood has talked about the selection in an apologetic fashion. If it is a question of a fabulous profit to be made out of this deal as the sole agent of the Muslim League Ministry, it must be a firm in which one of the high lights of the Muslim League Party, is a prominent figure. Again, if it is a question of sentimental generosity by agreeing to forego at once by a stroke of the pen a profit of Rs. 40 lakhs—a somewhat strange feat in a rapacious world—why, the credit must again go to the big Muslim League firm. I am imputing no other motive at the time in the absence of more definite materials. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Can't expect you to understand it.) I do not want to understand your rubbish.

Mr. Suhrawardy is bitterly lamenting the result of his mission to the province of Orissa. In spite of Mr. Suhrawardy's faith in the stamina of Mr. Ispahani's organisation to face the difficulties of the situation and the opposition of other Governments, he has egregiously failed to take advantage of the extremely favourable situation created by the Government of India.

Now, Sir, the question of the exclusion of Calcutta and Howrah from the proposed food drive has been repeatedly raised in course of this debate. I might inform this House that the day before the food drive was launched, Mr. Suhrawardy was pleased to call a conference of party leaders—the first and the last that he has done—where this proposed food drive was considered in its different aspects. Not a whisper was uttered by Mr. Suhrawardy on that occasion that Calcutta and Howrah were going to be excluded from the scheme. The whole discussion proceeded on the footing that Calcutta and Howrah would be as much a part of the scheme as the rural areas. And, lo and behold, we were startled to find next morning in a Press Note that Calcutta and Howrah had been excluded. This is the way in which he has taken the party leaders into his confidence in a major matter such as the food drive in Bengal. Is it then, Sir, in these circumstances at all strange that even Mr. Hendry has been constrained to remark with regard to this exclusion of Howrah and Calcutta that a subtle purpose which has not yet been divulged might be behind this exclusion?

Well, Sir, Mr. Hendry in the exuberance of the felicity of his expression with regard to the present Food Minister and the Ministry has said that the purpose of the food drive has been served. So far as the members of this House and the public of Bengal are concerned, they are yet in this position that not one single item of information has been vouchsafed to them as a result of the drive except a mere speculation that 7 or 8 million maunds of food-grains have been discovered, an amount which is insignificant compared to the requirements of the province. Then again the only other piece of information which the Food Minister has been pleased to dole out to this House is that every area has reported a deficit thereby belying the robust optimism of the Food Minister before the food drive was undertaken. That is so far the net result of the energy and application of the Hon'ble

Mr. Suhrawardy on which he has been profusely complimented by the European Party and my esteemed and honourable friend Mr. M. B. Mullick (Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Thank you.) (Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALLIK: And also Mr. Bankim Mukherji.)

Now, Sir, I do not desire to prolong the agonies of my friends opposite who are feeling restive because of my speech, but I would only conclude by drawing the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to one passage in his famous speech delivered on the 27th March. He said: "Our people are patient, they can starve, they can commit suicide, but a time will come when their exasperation is bound to break the bounds of law and order. And then when it passes beyond endurance, you will have looting which has already commenced, you will have arson and other crimes." I will give the present Government a fair warning. If they do not desire to pool all the resources of the province in the political as well as in the economic sphere for the purpose of finding a solution of this all-important problem, the results which Mr. Suhrawardy had forecast in his speech are bound to take place and that sooner rather than later. (Applause.)

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, for two days we have debated on the present food situation in the province. It goes without saying that we stand face to face before a national crisis. An attempt has been made on behalf of some of the spokesmen of Government to suggest that the present situation is due to a legacy left by the past Ministry. Sir, I do not propose to enter upon a detailed discussion of the good and weak points of the past Ministry. One thing stands out prominently before our eyes; the past Ministry did attempt to solve the food situation but where it did not succeed, it did not keep the reasons back from the Legislature or the public of Bengal. There were certain policies which were forced on the province more on account of the decision of the Government of India than of the Provincial Ministry, more on account of the obstructive and interfering conduct of the Governor than of the Ministry, relating, for example, to the denial policy, to large scale exports and the purchase of rice by or on behalf of the Government of India. Those were panicky weeks and months when the authorities thought that Japan after conquering Burma would invade Bengal, and the main thing that could prevent Japan from occupying this province would be the removal and destruction of leaky country boats and other conveyances and of stores of rice from the coastal districts of Bengal. Sir, the then Chief Minister made it abundantly clear that on account of the obstructive attitude taken up by the Governor and some of the permanent officials it was impossible for the then Ministry to carry into effect the policy that it advocated. Today as my friend Mr. Suhrawardy has pointed out, the Department of Civil Supplies can boast of Indian officers of repute, although that very same attempt made by the past Ministry was vetoed by the Governor who was not prepared to hand over key positions in this department, acting in his individual judgment, except to European members of the Indian Civil Service or non-official Europeans. I have nothing to say against them, but the fact remains that the policy which they tried to introduce and give effect to failed. The

officers are still there; some of them have been promoted; some of them are suffering from nervous breakdown, but no one is here taking into account the horrid state to which they had reduced the province. A Judge of the High Court was hurriedly brought from the Bench to preside over the Department of Civil Supplies and he did not know how quickly to go back to his old place again. But, Sir, the point before the House today is, I submit, not what the past Ministry did or did not do, because it is out of office today, and the main onslaught on the past Ministry during the March session was due to its alleged failure to control the food situation. The point before the House today is, what has the present Ministry done and whether, considering the situation dispassionately, the House will agree that given the opportunities that the present Ministry has had from the beginning of its office, it has justified the steps that it has taken and has really served the larger interests of the province.

Now, Sir, I come to the statements which the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies made since the beginning of his new office. There was one thing which the past Ministry did and that was to declare that Bengal did suffer from shortage of food-grains. That was one definite contribution to the credit of the past Ministry and it also made the Government of India agree that the situation facing the province was a serious one due to shortage of foodstuffs. That was in March. In April Mr. Suhrawardy took office as Minister of Civil Supplies. I have scrutinised the numerous statements couched in beautiful language which were issued by him or on behalf of the new Ministry and God knows why this attempt was made by him to play a colossal hoax on the unfortunate people of Bengal, namely, to declare that there was really no shortage of foodstuffs, no shortage of rice in Bengal and all that had happened was that there was maldistribution and small hoarders, private consumers and agriculturists were responsible for the present deplorable state of affairs. Now, Sir, in one of the statements issued by Mr. Suhrawardy it was said that the worst feature of the last Ministry's food policy was its insistence on shortage. That was on 17th May. Then again, he said, "There is in fact a sufficiency of food-grains for the people of Bengal". I ask specially the members who are sitting opposite anxious to give their support to the Ministry to demand an explanation from Mr. Suhrawardy. What were the data before him which justified him to make that remark that there was in fact a sufficiency of food-grains for the people of Bengal? Not satisfied with his bare statement, he proceeded to remark, "Full statistical details, which will clearly demonstrate that there is a sufficiency, will shortly be published". Where are those statistics? Have these statistics been collected or are they being manufactured?

Then again, Sir, he says in a statement which was issued on behalf of Government both in Bengali and in English:—

"আবেদন ও সতর্ক বাণী"

"An Appeal and a Warning".

"দরিদ্র জনসাধারণকে আর উৎপাড়ণ করা চলিবেনা"

"You must not grind the faces of the poor".

Who is that "you"? Is that Mr. Suhrawardy standing before a mirror and addressing himself or was he seriously addressing the people of Bengal?

"সত্যই কি বাংলা দেশে খাদ্য শস্যের অভাব ঘটিয়াছে? না নিশ্চয়ই না।"

"Is there a real shortage of food in Bengal? No, most certainly no", says Mr. Suhrawardy in spite of the soaring prices and in spite of the untold sufferings of millions of the poor!

Then he says, "তবে আসল ব্যাপারটা কি? এ বৎসরের শেষ পর্য্যন্ত আমাদের অভাব মিটাইবার জন্য যথেষ্ট পরিমান খাদ্য শস্য আমাদের ছিল এবং তাহা ছাড়া অন্যান্য দেশ হইতেও আজ পর্য্যন্ত প্রচুর পরিমানে খাদ্য শস্য আমদানি হইতেছে। আড়ৎদার, ব্যবসায়ী, অবস্থাপন্ন কৃষক, এবং আরো অনেকে আতঙ্ক বশতঃ অথবা জনসাধারণকে নির্ম্মমভাবে শোষণ করিবার আশায় প্রচুর খাদ্যশস্য গোপনে জমা করিয়াছেন এবং এখনো করিতেছেন।"

That was the statement which was issued, that was one of the official documents issued, by the present Ministry of Bengal: there was no shortage; there was ample foodstuff and it was the people themselves who were responsible for causing suffering. And it was not the big hoarders, big stockists and big profiteers like A, B, C and X, Y, Z whose stocks were searched and unearthed, but it was the ordinary people, the private consumers and agriculturists who were alleged to have been grinding the faces of the poor and a crusade was directed against them. Now, it is curious that simultaneously with this announcement made by the new Ministry of Bengal, which had the special blessing of the Governor of this province and a section of permanent officials, His Master's voice spoke out in the House of Commons. There Mr. Amery declared, "Yes, there is some trouble in India and in Bengal but there is no shortage of food-stuffs in the country; there is only hoarding and maldistribution and the Government is looking after this aspect of the problem. The false picture painted by a so-called responsible Ministry just enabled the representative of His Majesty's Government to get up in the House of Commons and to announce to the world that the serious situation that threatened Bengal, which was near the eastern war frontier, was not due to the pursuit of any wrong policy by the Government either in Delhi or in Calcutta but due to the foolish and obstructive attitude taken up by the people themselves.

Now, Sir, what happened next? Mr. Suhrawardy declared that there was plenty of foodstuffs in Bengal. All that had to be done was to find out the foodstuffs even from under *taktaposhes*. After a tired and busy night, he seriously made a speech declaring that, if necessary, he would himself go under the *taktaposh* of every householder and bring out the rice. I know that many householders got nervous. If Mr. Suhrawardy really starts entering into households and going under *taktaposh* at night or even during day-time Heaven protect those householders from the after-effects of the ministerial attacks. Could there have been, I ask, a sillier approach to a problem vitally affecting the lives of millions of people?

Now, another reason put forward by Mr. Suhrawardy was that the problem was mainly psychological. I do not know when Mr. Suhrawardy had become a student of abnormal psychology. His place would then be

Ranchi and not Calcutta because that was the place where persons suffering under delusion and anxious to study abnormal psychology were properly dealt with. He says that the problem is psychological. And how is that to be tackled? People are merely to be told "Don't get panicky. I am here sitting as the Civil Supplies Minister and telling you there is plenty of foodstuff. We have statistics which we do not intend to publish. Everything will be all right. Don't get panicky." Even if he as the spokesman of Government is to try some sort of appeal, reassuring public mind, is he capable of getting the people round him psychologically by simply a wave of the magic wand from Writers' Building?

There was no question of his taking advice from different parties. He talked of psychology. He talked loosely of appeal for co-operation. But he never cared for popular support; he never honestly sought the co-operation of all parties. He was swayed by party politics himself. The party leaders were sent for on 17th May. It is no secret. The demand was made by all, including the admiring group of the European Party, that the whole scheme of the Government must be placed in the hands of the leaders before any opinion could be expressed. A solemn assurance was given by the Civil Supplies Minister and the Chief Minister that copies of the scheme which the Government had in view would be placed before the party leaders. What happened then? Days and weeks passed. Then suddenly only a few days before the actual famous food drive with an incompetent and ill-equipped coachman was to be started in Bengal, the party leaders were hurriedly summoned in the Bengal Legislative Assembly House. We had been meanwhile to some district towns and there we were given copies of the scheme by others who had already received them, cut and dried, circulated throughout the province with instructions that it should be given effect to from the 8th or 9th June. This camouflage of consultation between the Minister and the party leaders took place about a few days before the actual food drive was to have started. That was the sort of co-operation which the new Ministry wanted to depend upon to make a psychological approach to the problem.

Now, Sir, what about the details of the food drive? I am not going to trouble the House with the details of the scheme. There is none who will object or who can object to the proposal that a census of stocks should be taken in the province. In fact that should have been done long ago and was actually decided upon by the last Ministry. It is no secret that this decision was upset by no other person than His Excellency the Governor himself who said that it was not necessary because there were more urgent and important things to be done, relating to the removal of rice and boats from the coastal parts of Bengal lest the Japs should come and take advantage of these great resources of the province.

Now, Sir, so far as taking statistics is concerned, no one can have any objection to that. But the scheme was much more than mere stock-taking. I got a copy of a Bengali pamphlet only this morning coming from a distant part of Bengal which is the real basis of the great scheme for which originality has been claimed by Mr. Suhrawardy. It appears that before

the new Ministry came into office a circular was issued by the Palli Unnayan Bibhag—I believe, the Village Reconstruction Department—under the signature of Mr. Ishaque which was practically the basis of the scheme which the new Ministry after devoting hours and days of thought was supposed to have discovered for the benefit of the people of Bengal. There is one main difference in the scheme which Mr. Suhrawardy has placed before the people. While calculating the surplus stock Mr. Suhrawardy directed that children below four years of age of poor families were not expected to take any rice and should be excluded. Well, he did not even know that they could not live on other food like Horlick's milk and other delicious children's food ordinarily available for richer people. Mr. Ishaque, the Director of Rural Reconstruction, had the goodness of including even children who were aged below four. But Mr. Suhrawardy came and the great reform he made was practically to suggest that children might be starved! (Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Because he has no children.) I do not know that, but this omission showed up his mentality and methods.

Then, Sir, what was the result of the food drive? The food drive went on. We stated from the beginning that the food drive was not going to lead to anything but simply to criminal waste of most valuable time. An order was issued under the Defence of India Rules that no newspaper would be allowed to comment on the food drive unless the editorials were placed before the Home Department for previous scrutiny. That was a taste of the new regime of the liberator of freedom, to quote Mr. Siddiqi. If people wanted to criticise and point out what was fundamentally wrong with the scheme—they were to be gagged and no article was to be published without pre-censoring by the Home Department. The scheme was made to cause a tremendous stir. What was exactly the scheme, we asked the Government officers and Mr. Suhrawardy at the conference we attended. What did the Ministry actually intend to do? There was no guarantee to make up deficits. In one place the Ministry stated that it wanted village self-sufficiency, it wanted local self-sufficiency; it did not want that any surplus rice should be removed from any area unless the needs of that area were first met. In the same breath we found that rich traders and profiteers were allowed a free movement in all parts of the province and out of the panic of application of Defence of India Rules and forcible seizure the rice which came out was purchased at fancy prices by these profiteers and traders who were moving round Bengal like so many vultures and mainly removed the stocks to Calcutta areas. What was the result? The result was that whatever rice was or might be available was taken away from rural areas. Practically the entire rural area was denuded. And except on paper there was no attempt to make up deficits. Mr. Suhrawardy in one of his statements stated: "it was significant that this drive has already resulted in a sharp drop in prices." Two or three such statements appeared and then the statements also vanished as rice began to disappear and the prices started rising up. He has been discreetly silent about prices during the last fortnight. We have not yet received reports from all parts of Begal, but I take upon myself the responsibility for stating that in about eight districts from which we received information the price of rice has already

gone up from 3 to 5 rupees per maund more than what it was on or about the 25th June, 1943. At Siliguri it is + Rs. 4-8; at Rangpur + Rs. 4; at Manikganj, + Rs. 4; at Mymensingh, + Rs. 4; at Netrokona, + Rs. 6; at Jessore, + Rs. 5-8; at Khulna, + Rs. 5; at Satkhira, + Rs. 5; at Dinajpur, + Rs. 5; and so on. That is the net result of the food drive. And why were Calcutta and Howrah excluded? If you were really sincere and genuine, if you wanted that there should be a full stock-taking, you should have started with Calcutta and Howrah. Why did not you take the stocks of those wealthy profiteers like Messrs. Ispahani & Co, who, according to the Minister himself, can today forego a profit of 40 lakhs for the benefit of the poor people of this province. There may be Shaw Wallace & Co., there may be other people. Why did you exclude these particular firms? What was the reason? The reason was that there were certain firms which cannot be easily touched; the reason was that there were certain quarters near which the mighty Mr. Suhrawardy dared not go, because they were the people on whom the Ministry had to depend for its existence. So they had to be left out, and this so-called drive had to be undertaken against poor consumers and agriculturists. Of course, any stock-taking in Calcutta now would be meaningless, as stated in a leaflet circulated by one of the supporters of Mr. Suhrawardy criticising his activities that even if a drive was now undertaken in Calcutta, one canot get at the truth because rice would be removed from this particular area to other parts meanwhile.

Now, Sir, so far as the deficit is concerned, Mr. Suhrawardy has given us no information, for he says collection of statistics is not yet completed. The statistics will never be published for they would show colossal figures of deficit in every area. He says that he has received information that a surplus which would amount to six to seven million maunds has been secured. The figure is illusory as it does not take the deficits into account. But is he really correct about the figures? Six to seven million maunds means 60 to 70 lakhs of maunds. When Mr. Suhrawardy will give his reply I hope he will please check the statement he has made because it is contrary to a statement which, though not an authorised one, was published a few days ago in a Calcutta newspaper to the effect that the stock would be about eight to nine lakhs and not millions of maunds. Sir, there is some difference between 80 lakhs and 8 lakhs. Even if it is 80 lakhs, as Mr. David Hendry has pointed out, it would mean food for fifteen days only to the people of Bengal, on the supposition there was no deficit, which again was far from the truth. What then? I would ask Mr. Suhrawardy to answer this question, what next? Before he launched upon this programme we warned him about a possible failure of the drive to discover big stocks sufficient to serve the people. We said, "You are evading your responsibility, you are throwing the entire responsibility on the people themselves. If you fail here, what next?" He said, "I do not know".

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I did never say that.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: You did say: "I do not know". If you want to withdraw the statement now, you are quite welcome.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I said I did not know what next to do.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Sir, he admits he said that he did not know what next to do. Does he mean to say that a responsible Minister should have launched upon this drive without making himself certain as to the steps he has to take next in case the drive fails, as it has indeed actually failed? Sir, is this the way in which he discharges his responsibility? (Mr. Suhrawardy utters something.) It is no use his coming here and speaking in a tone which befits the residents of the Zoological Gardens. If the position he took up was that he did not know what he was going to do next in case the drive failed, I would say he shirked his responsibility and is not fit to hold his office.

Sir, let me come to the constructive part of the Ministry's activities—the great free trade zone in North-Eastern India. That was a great triumph, Mr. Suhrawardy said. Sir Nazimuddin expanded himself when he said, "We have got free trade in Eastern India". Today that free trade is going to disappear without bringing any rice to Bengal or conferring any benefit to the people at large, except the contribution of Mr. Suhrawardy to make Mr. Ispahani the sole purchaser for Bengal Government on mysterious terms to which I shall refer presently! I say, Sir, that the Ministry bungled from the beginning by failing to take proper advantage of the free trade scheme on account of its haste, its indecision, its anxiety to patronise particular firms and persons. It thus lost a great chance to serve the province. Sir, what should have been the duty of the Civil Supply Department?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Nonsense!

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Nonsense is an epithet which applies to the Civil Supply Minister because he is today entirely devoid of sense, and if that means nonsense, he is nonsense personified.

Now, Sir, so far as Bihar or Orissa was concerned, what did Mr. Suhrawardy do? It is no use his trying to shout in irritating temper inside the Chamber. He has got to give replies. I am giving him facts and let him reply by stating facts. What did Mr. Suhrawardy do with regard to Orissa and Bihar? Why did he not negotiate with the Government in those provinces? He sent wealthy traders and other private individuals with full liberty to purchase rice. What was the result? The price of rice there varied from Rs. 6, Rs. 8 and Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 and Rs. 18. Immediately the prices started jumping up. Here were people with plenty of money in their pocket coming from Bengal, offering to purchase rice at any price. The result was that like a blaze of fire famine conditions spread from Bengal to Orissa and Bihar, with this difference perhaps between the Orissa Ministry and the present Bengal Ministry that the Orissa Minister had the courage to admit that conditions were serious and in one district alone during a fortnight 70 people died of starvation on account of famine conditions prevailing in Balasore and here on the other hand, facts are suppressed and Government responsibility is constantly evaded. That was the procedure adopted and that was how you lost the co-operation and sympathy of

neighbouring provinces. You let loose wealthy traders and individuals who wanted to profit by easy purchases in different parts of Orissa and Bihar. The Government of Orissa revolted; the Government of Bihar revolted. Then Mr. Suhrawardy tried to negotiate with them. I say, Sir, it was the clear duty of the Bengal Ministry to do it at the very first stage and that is the charge which I bring forward against it. Why did Mr. Suhrawardy hesitate first to go to Orissa and Bihar? Was it because he, a protagonist of the Pakistan scheme, did not care to ask favours from Orissa and Bihar as they formed part of the future Hindusthan? Alas, the economic structure of Pakisthan is collapsing and Bengal, the future home of Pakisthan, has to be provided for through the generosity of adjoining Hindu provinces. Mr. Suhrawardy has to apply to the Central Government for help. Without a Central Government you cannot after all control the affairs of Bengal and India. He has to apply and run to Orissa and Bihar; and he told us "We may have to go to Nepal". I said, why not go to Burma; you will get rice quickly from there and the problem may be solved, if you are allowed to return home! But let me ask in all seriousness, why did not Mr. Suhrawardy approach the Bihar Government and Orissa Ministry and try to come to some settlement. Why did he not go and say to each, "Can you spare, say five or ten lakhs of maunds of rice for Bengal? We are starving." The question of price could have been fixed round the table between the Bengal, Orissa and Bihar Governments without allowing traders and profiteers and middlemen to play havoc with prices. The Ministry could have approached the problem from that point of view but it did not.

I next come, Sir, to the question of appointment of Ispahani's as the sole purchaser on behalf of the Government of Bengal. I can at once say that I have nothing personal against Mr. Ispahani, much less do I know all the partners in the firm. It is not a personal issue; it is a question of principle. It was nothing short of a scandal that the Ministry should have appointed a particular firm as the sole agent, and what is more, advanced about two crores of rupees to that firm without a single scrap of document. Can Mr. Suhrawardy produce a single contract entered upon between Ispahani's and the Government of Bengal? Where is the direction taken from the Bengal Legislative Assembly? It is a mockery. We are sitting here as the Bengal Legislative Assembly trying to decide the fate of the province. The budget was attempted to be brought in a hole and corner fashion. The budget has gone back, but even the budget that was presented for our consideration last week did not include this figure of rupees two crores or more which has already been advanced without authority to Messrs. Ispahani and Company. It is clearly an unauthorised and illegal expenditure from public funds the like of which it is difficult to find, unless you go back to the tantalising and mysterious surroundings of Pretoria Street about which we heard a lot and the rest may be narrated by Mr. Suhrawardy himself.

Now, Sir, no terms and conditions have yet been finally agreed upon between Ispahani's and the Government of Bengal. I make this statement and let the Government contradict it if it dares to. Up till now there has been no written agreement between the Government of Bengal and Ispahani's.

No tenders were invited. The terms have not been offered to others. Ispahani's have refused to pay any security as demanded by the Government of Bengal. Will Government dare say 'no'? Is it not a scandal of the first magnitude that at this perilous time two crores of rupees or more of public money is to be handed over to a firm, a partner of which is a pillar of the party to which Mr. Suhrawardy belongs? It is said the purpose is to serve the millions of Bengal's unfortunate children. Why, I ask you—and this has to be answered by Mr. Suhrawardy—why was this extraordinary procedure adopted? What was the necessity? Why were not tenders called? Mr. Suhrawardy says that the Chambers of Commerce were consulted. Such a brazen-faced falsehood was never uttered on the floor of the House. It has already been stated on behalf of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce that that Chamber was not consulted. The representative of the Marwari Chamber of Commerce yesterday got up and said that that Chamber was not consulted. I have the authority of the Indian Chamber of Commerce to say that that Chamber was not also consulted. Then why this deliberate attempt to delude the legislature and the public of Bengal? Why were not tenders called? You talk of foregoing of profit. What is this profit of Rs. 40 lakhs? What does it mean? I do not know what it means. Mr. Suhrawardy might be able to explain, but I suppose the position is like this. I am taking certain figures hypothetically. Ispahani's may have in their possession five lakhs maunds of rice which at market rate today in Calcutta may be sold at Rs. 30 per maund. Supposing Ispahani's come forward and say "We will sell this rice to you at Rs. 22 per maund". It means for every maund Ispahani's are supposed to give up a profit of Rs. 8 and if it is 5 lakhs of maunds the total makes Rs. 40 lakhs. But the point is at what price did Ispahani's purchase originally? Should not there be an enquiry as regards the purchase value of this rice—whether it was Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 or Rs. 15? By allowing Ispahani's already to make a profit of Rs. 7 or 8 per maund, you have filled their pocket with profit of 28 to 32 lakhs of rupees. Who is the profiteer, I ask? What is the policy of the present Government of Bengal in giving protection to favoured profiteers and allow them to prosper and thrive on the miseries of the people of the province? I would appeal to the Muslim members who are sitting on the other side to consider the situation dispassionately and not treat this as a party question. It is not a question of Muslim League or Congress or this party or that. (Dr. ABDUL MOTALEB MALIK: We learnt from you.) You did not learn from us. And if you did, why should you copy what is bad and pernicious. It is true that Ispahani's got a *benamdar* contract during the office of the previous Ministry but it is known that was done under the orders of the Governor of Bengal by the Joint Secretary. This has been mentioned by Mr. Fazlul Huq here on the floor of the House and the facts have yet to be challenged. May I ask in all seriousness how are these transactions going on now? I am told there is a suggestion that Ispahani's will not purchase rice on their own account so long as they serve as Government agent, but that is a term which Ispahani's want to modify, a term to which they have not yet agreed. They have suggested that they should be given the permission to purchase on their own account

with the approval of the Director of Civil Supplies. These important terms have yet to be settled and meanwhile crores of rupees are being handed over from the public exchequer to a favoured member of the Muslim League Party.

Sir, for far less serious allegations Mr. Hendry and his party became furious and withheld their support to the past Ministry. There have been no allegations like these against the past Ministry. What are they going to do now? They are sitting here like tame lambs and they will be taken like dumb driven cattle to the lobby along with Mr. Suhrawardy. A certificate has been given to the Ministry by Mr. Hendry and like a petulant child he has asked for a certificate from the Ministry too! "I scratch your back and you scratch mine". (A voice from the Government Benches: They scratched your back also!) Sir, I am glad that my honourable friend said that. Yes, they tried to scratch our back, but when they found that it was something different from what they liked it to be and we were not prepared to scratch theirs, the European Party turned to the side of the Opposition in March last and put the present Ministry in office.

Now, Sir, the House would like to know from Mr Suhrawardy today why Mr. McInnes resigned. (Dr NALINAKSHA SANYAL: He was prevailed upon to resign.) Mr. McInnes left his office in disgust. Does Mr. Suhrawardy dare deny that? I say, Sir, that Mr McInnes went away because he was disgusted with the manner in which the Minister was administering the Department of Civil Supplies. Did he not say that if the affairs of this department were to be controlled in the interest of or according to the wishes of one particular firm which was itself so closely involved, it is much better that Government should deal with that firm directly and not through a dummy post office? Sir, I shall not deal with this point any further except to say one word. (At this stage Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi muttered something while sitting.) Sir, I am glad that Mr. Siddiqi has interrupted me and his conscience has been aroused. Mr. Siddiqi declared the other day that he was an indepedent member so far as questions of constitutional practice were concerned. He need not be impatient. I shall now give him a problem of constitutional practice. If you will please refer to page 34, Chapter I of May's Parliamentary Practice, there is a convention which is supported by law that no member of the House of Commons who is a Government contractor has the right to vote or even has the right to continue as a member of the House of Commons. I cannot, Sir, actually raise a point of order, because I know that this is not based on convention but on a definite statute passed by the British Parliament. Now, Sir, Mr. Siddiqi is famous for his knowledge of constitutional practice and conventions in England, in Turkey, in Spain, in France, in Belgium, in Honolulu and everywhere else. Will he now have the courage to admit that having regard to this very salutary principle—Mr. Ispahani and any other Government contractor—should cease to be a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: There were contractors during your Ministry.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Who are they?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Look round and see them.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: If there were M. L. As. who were Government contractors, they should have been similarly dealt with and they deserved no sympathy. One of the reasons why Mr. Suhrawardy condemned the previous Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department was his undue patronage and favouritism, and now if Mr. Suhrawardy says that his self-satisfaction lies in thinking that he is following in the glorious footsteps of the last Ministry in this respect, perhaps with compound interest, the consolation will be his and of the party to which he belongs. But let hypocrisy then stand unmasked before the public of Bengal.

The next point is with regard to the system of distribution. Here I shall be very brief With regard to the system of distribution Government says that controlled shops have failed and it proposes to open Government shops to the extent of 800. Sir, I do not hold a brief for controlled shops. I know that controlled shops have failed in many cases for two broad reasons—(1) want of supply, and (2) corruption in some cases. My point is that if controlled shops individually have failed on account of corruption, get rid of them. No one will come and find fault for any such action. But why do away entirely with the ordinary channels of trade which is inconsistent with the policy pursued by any Government with regard to distribution? I am not saying with regard to purchase. That I shall come to later. With regard to distribution, why should a proposal be made that all ordinary channels of trade are to be dispensed with and Government shops are to be opened? What are these shops? To whom will they be offered? At what price? On what consideration and for what areas? Now, Sir, the last Ministry decided that unless a man was in trade for at least three years, he would not be entitled to a controlled shop. That was a salutary check. Why has that order been ignored? Is it a hindrance in the way of distributing patronage on communal and political considerations?

What about the "Grow More Food" campaign? What are the constructive proposals of Government? Food will not grow on paper and mere propaganda is an eye-wash. Every day we are getting letters from all parts of Bengal that there is a tremendous dearth of agricultural seeds and unless Government takes proper steps now, the next *aman* crop of the year will be a failure. What will be the result? With the province practically denuded of rice and with the prospect of the next main crop failing; can you even visualise the dire consequences which will follow? I do not know whether the Ministry is receiving information, but there has been an extraordinary loss of cattle suffering from particular diseases in

different parts of the province. Cattle purchase for military requirements has also proceeded on an enormous scale. One member of the Assembly who recently came from his native home said that out of 14 bullocks which he had, thirteen had died of small-pox and only one has been left alive and that is the general picture from different parts of the province. What are the constructive proposals of Government with regard to various aspects of the "Grow More Food" campaign? Again, has the Ministry considered the dangerous consequences on public health due to spread of diseases and epidemics in the coming months which may well fall as the last fatal blow on the already shattered health and vitality of millions of Bengal's unfortunate children? What steps, I ask, have been taken to prevent deaths due to starvation and disease?

Now, Sir, what is the remedy? The remedy is, Government must declare a famine and apply generously the normal provisions for meeting famine conditions. Government must undertake full responsibility for feeding the people of the province and not indulge in a cheap doctrine of self-help or of forcible loans of rice, that barely exists, repayable by village committees when able, without any guarantee from Government. You must take the responsibility for feeding the people or get out; and let your masters, who have created this state of affairs in the province, the Brititsh Government which is the real ruling power, let the British Government take the responsibility for feeding the people of Bengal and maintaining peace and order.

So far as the main problem is concerned, there must be a full and complete control over prices and supplies. As Mr. Hendry put it, there are three ways of doing it. Government may make all purchases; the traders may purchase; or both Government and traders may purchase It is the Government's coming to the market which has upset the situation completely. The situation will never be overcome unless Government takes full control. The traders cannot be given an unfettered jurisdiction because it means depleting the province and unfair and inequitable distribution. It is Government which can take full control of supplies and prices and distribution leading to rationing Rationing means guarantee of supply. Without supply rationing is meaningless What Government is doing is worse than rationing. Government is practically starving the people. There is no supply, and Government does not say that it will introduce rationing and take responsibility for the supply. People are prepared to suffer and sacrifice, provided justice and equity govern the principles of supply and distribution, affecting all classes of people. What sort of Government can take charge of this great responsibilty? Not certainly an illegitimate offspring of intrigue, fraud and unconstitutionalism, or a combination of betrayers and strong partisans. At this supreme crisis in the history of the province it is not possible for any party Government to take full control of supply and prices and undertake the responsibility for feeding six crores of people of Bengal. That is a sheer impossibility. If the Muslim League is in opposition and if this side forms the Cabinet, even then that Government cannot solve the problem. Indeed, we have got to forget party differences.

The Ministry must enjoy the confidence of all sections of the people. If you are genuinely sincere in your attempt to help, there must be a national approach to the problem—not the sort of approach, prompted entirely by party and political considerations—and there should be a Cabinet consisting of representatives of all parties and groups who are willing to work together. (Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: Including yourself?) Not myself for I refuse to be a cat's paw. Mr. Rasik Lal Biswas knows it very well just as everyone knows his own anxiety to go higher and higher up the ladder by fresh acts of betrayal and treachery. But there will be enough competent people who may be willing to shoulder responsibility. Party spirit must die out in the face of this common national calamity. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Hear, hear.) And that party spirit will die out not by the shouts of "Hear, hear" by a Minister who is actuated only by party and communal considerations but by all agreeing to come to a settlement in such a manner as is conducive to the welfare of the province and not to any particular party which thrives on British patronage. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Hear, hear again.)

Now, Sir, I would like to conclude, if I may, with a short reference to history. I shall not quote Bankimchandra, lest it be said he held biased views. Historians, British historians, have reiterated that cycles of famine and pestilence in the history of Bengal have come with strange precision and certainty. Hunter refers to the amazing circumstances under which the kingdom of Gour fell a victim to pestilence just when the Moghul Empire was spreading its arms round Bengal. In one year, that great and beautiful city which was the pride not only of Bengal but the whole of India, vanished, and as Hunter put it in his inimitable language, it became a hunting ground of tigers and monkeys. Then the Moghul Empire came, ruled and disappeared. After some centuries, came the famous famine of 1770 in Bengal known in Bengali as ছিয়াত্তরের মন্বন্তর and that again just after the battle of Plassey, when the British were trying to establish suzerainty over Bengal. That was the second cycle. Now, Sir, today we are face to face with another famine and grave economic crisis. Whether the second cycle will continue to have a further lease of life or to the misfortune of Bengal, a third cycle of foreign domination is in sight, Heaven alone knows! Reports of death, suffering and misery are pouring in from all parts of Bengal. Much as Government may try to suppress them or minimise their gravity by sweet-worded communiqués issued by a pliable Ministry, the finger of Fate points irresistibly towards a strange and awful repetition of history. Let us ponder here for a moment, when history is going to repeat itself, as regards the situation in Bengal when the great famine of 1770 took place. Now this is what Hunter says. I would beg members to apply their minds to this picture and ask the British authorities how they mean to discharge their obligation in 1943. (Interruption by Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi.) I know it hurts Mr. Siddiqi. (Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: It does.) There may be others in the House who are more merciful and who may have more tender feelings for the people of this unfortunate

Bengal. If Mr. Siddiqi coming from distant Sind is yet to be satisfied with the pile he has made from Bengal and has yet to rouse himself to have pity for the people of this province, I can only take pity on him. Now, Sir, here Hunter gives a picture of the famine of 1770:—

"All through the stifling summer of 1770, the people went on dying. The husbandmen sold their cattle; they sold their implements of agriculture; they devoured their seed-grain; they sold their sons and daughters till at length no buyer of children could be found. They ate the leaves of trees and the grass of the field; and in June, 1770, the Resident of the Durbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead. Day and night a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches poured into the great city..... Streets were blocked up with promiscuous heaps of the dying and the dead. Interment could not do its work quick enough; even dogs and jackals, the public scavengers of the east, became unable to accomplish their revolting work and the multitude of mangled and festering corpses at length threatened the existence of the citizens."

Now, Sir, a similar picture was given by no less a person than Macaulay in his Life of Lord Clive:—

"Tender and delicate women whose veils had never been lifted before the public gaze came forth from the inner chamber in which Eastern jealousy had kept watching over their beauty, threw themselves on the earth before the passers-by and with loud wailings implored a handful of rice for their children. The Hooghly every day rolled down thousands of corpses close to the porticoes and gardens of the English conquerors. The very streets of Calcutta were blocked up by the dying and the dead. The lean and feeble survivors had not energy enough to bear the bodies of their kindred to the funeral pile or to the holy river or even to scare away the jackals and vultures who fed on human remains in the face of day."

Sir, it is not stories but actual reports that we are getting from different parts of Bengal—today I received half-a-dozen letters from different parts of the province—that scenes similar to what I have described are being enacted already. Sir, the question which I would like to put to the House is: What is the solution of this great calamity? Where will our parties be, where shall we be, if life in Bengal comes to an abrupt end, not on account of any ravages of nature as had happened on previous occasions but on account of a wrong policy pursued by the authorities responsible for the administration of this province and country? For nearly two centuries the people have been bled to death, exploitation has gone on unchecked. During the last four years for the so-called purposes of the war the interests of the common people have been ruthlessly sacrificed and they have today almost reached death's door.

Now, Sir this is what Macaulay says giving his reasons for the serious state of affairs in Bengal in 1770: "No doubt nature did its work, but over

and above nature there were the effects of misgovernment of English administration just before 1770." And these are the actual words of Macaulay:—

"Every servant of British factory was armed with all the powers of his master; and his master was armed with all the powers of the Company. Enormous fortunes were thus rapidly accumulated at Calcutta whilst thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the extremity of wretchedness." —(Could anyone paint better the sordid picture of the foundation of the great trusteeship of British rule in India?)—"They had been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never under a tyranny like this. They found the little finger of the Company thicker than the loins of Surajah Dowla. Under their old masters, they had at least one resource; when the evil became insupportable, the people rose and pulled down the Government, but the English Government was not to be so shaken off. That Government oppressive as the most oppressive form of barbarian despotism was strong with all the strength of civilization. It resembled the Government of evil genii rather than the government of human tyrants."

This is the picture of how English rule started in India nearly two centuries ago. Today we are in 1943. Are we in any better position today to serve our own people and country and save them from the hands of organised exploiters and adventurers? My appeal to you is this. Today every one knows that the ultimate responsibility for this state of affairs rests on the British administrators in India. They wanted first to provide for their troops. They wanted to cater for those who were directly or indirectly concerned in war efforts, forgetting their great responsibility to the people of the country who must be fed and kept alive. We in Bengal, Mr. David Hendry reminds us, are on the border of the Eastern War Zone. How will this war be won? If Bengal is famished, if Bengal is ruined, can the war be won? Will peace and morale ever remain intact? Is it Bengal's fault that we are suffering like this? Whose fault is it that Burma fell? Whose fault is it that Singapore fell? It was not the fault of Bengal. Why then should the people of Bengal suffer? We have got to get from the Government of India and the British Government supplies, immediate supplies, of foodstuffs for the people of Bengal. (A VOICE FROM THE EUROPEAN GROUP: Why don't you go to Tojo, who is your pal?) That is the way in which we are to expect a reply from the European Group. Does my friend seriously suggest that we should look to Tojo for supply of rice and food and not to British Government? Will he advise Mr. Amery to say so publicly in the House of Commons? There could be no more ignoble end of British rule in India than such an abject admission of failure. He says that Tojo is our pal. It has yet to be decided by the verdict of history as to who are our pals. If after 170 years of British association with India, Bengal is going to be starved and famished like this, you are not certainly our pal. That much I can say. Whether Tojo is our pal or not, it remains to be seen and I shall say no more just now.

So far as the obligations of the Government of India are concerned, you just look into the figures. The wheat quota of Bengal for 1943—Mr. Suhrawardy will corect me if I give wrong figures—was 224,000 tons. The normal quota in peace time is about 2½ lakhs of tons. So, there is no additional wheat given to Bengal on account of the present serious emergency. But how much of this has come in 1943 from the Government of India? Only about 50,000 tons: in other words, 25 per cent. of our quota. Mr. Suhrawardy said that Bengal would live on other alternative substitutes such as jowar, maize and bajra. What was the quota for 1943? Two lakhs of tons. And how much has actually arrived? About 10,000 tons. What is the use of Mr. Suhrawardy getting up and making soothing speeches and false promises? What is the use of the Government of India issuing misleading communiqués from time to time, if ships cannot bring wheat from Australia and if food-grains cannot be brought to Bengal from other parts of India. Every Indian member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, should rise to a man. There should be a Government, strong and representative, whom the India Government or the British Government or the real masters of the Bengal Government will not be able to flout. A message should be sent to the Prime Minister of England that in view of the serious position that threatens Bengal it is disastrous to the interests of the Allied Powers themselves not to supply necessary foodstuffs to Bengal: it should be regarded as a war measure and there should be no more tinkering with it. If the higher authorities fail, the Ministry should abandon all responsibility and come out of office. Let us then see how peace and administration can continue with the help of the Governor and his coterie of officials. If Mr. Suhrawardy can only effect this——

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I agree with him.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: He agrees sometimes with all points, I know there is a dawn of returning sense in Mr. Suhrawardy. If he really agrees, then let him forsake party loyalty and domination; let us all combine and put forward our demand on behalf of the people of Bengal irrespective of race, community or colour and stand by them in this hour of supreme crisis. (Cheers.)

(At this stage the House was adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. SYED BADRUDDUJA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after the most brilliant and comprehensive speech of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee dealing with various aspects of the food problem in this province, I feel a little ill at ease to discuss the food situation tonight. Nevertheless, Sir, I feel that there are moments in the life history of a nation when silence is criminal. Believe me, I am not going to discuss the antecedents of the present Ministry, I am not going to enter into those questionable tactics that have been adopted to hustle the old Government out of existence and instal the new Government in office by resorting to a constitutional impropriety which finds no parallel

in any civilised country of the world. Sir, I confess when the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy took charge of the Civil Supply Department I was definitely under the impression that a man of his talents, of his energy of thought and action would succeed in solving this difficult problem of the day. Really, Sir, I have no prejudices against him, I have nothing but admiration for his wonderful abilities. But I was very soon disillusioned to find that behind all his statements, behind all the communiques issued from time to time, behind all the pompous promises and spacious assurances that he held out for solving the food problem his energies were directed more towards the consolidation of his own political front, more towards pampering his own coterie on whose suffrage he and his Government stood, than towards the solution of the real problem that faces us at the present moment. Sir, it is unfortunate that most of the arguments I have had to advance this evening have already been adduced. Mine will be nothing but a repetition of the same trend of reasoning, a rehash of the same arguments; nevertheless truth bears repetition. May I submit, Sir, that his preferential treatment shown to Messrs. Ispahani & Co., his political confreres, conclusively proves that the entire policy behind this Government has been inspired not by any lofty motive, not by any idealism, not by any vision, not by any imagination, inspired by no appreciation of the real difficulties that face us at the present moment, but purely by political and party considerations. Sir, Mr. Suhrawardy is perhaps realising a little too late that he must have committed the greatest blunder of his life in showering blessings upon his political confreres and collaborators in his task of freezing the country at this critical juncture. Let me warn him it might be possible for him to tide over the difficulty for the present but God's curses will be showered in abundance sooner or later, and it will not be possible for them to ignore the sufferings of millions of people who today knock about the streets for a morsel of food; it will not be possible for them to stifle for all time the groans and sobs of suffering humanity; it will not be possible for them for all time to take shelter under the subterfuge of declaring from the house top that there is no shortage in the province. When the food drive has conclusively proved that there is shortage everywhere in this province, it is not by hoodwinking the people, it is not by deluding people to believe in something which does not actually exist in the land that you can solve this problem.

The second question which has been so eloquently expressed and emphasised by all the previous speakers is the exclusion of Howrah and Calcutta, which contain the largest number of stockists and hoarders and profiteers, from the food drive. It is not only bare-faced, it is not only shameless, it is not only hypocritical, it is not only incompatible with the demand of the people, it is not only inconsistent with the spacious assurances that Mr. Suhrawardy held out from time to time but, if I may be permitted to use the expression—it is dishonest. It is conceived not in the interest of the people, it is conceived not to solve the people's difficulty, but it is conceived for the purpose of solving his own problem, the problem of his own Ministry. That is the problem that he has at heart at the present.

moment. I would not refer to figures that were quoted yesterday by my esteemed friend Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee, which have shown that in spite of all tall talk, in spite of the removal of embargo on the movement of commodities, in spite of all the facilities that are thrown open to them by the Government of India, the problem has not at all been solved. Prices have shot up beyond calculation; prices are going up because the food-grains of the country have been drained out. The policy of the Government has not merely been defective, but lacked that clear insight into the realities of the situation. Government have not taken stock of the real position, have not taken any first-hand information of the actual difficulties that the people have got to face. Sir, it is possible to talk of psychological approach, it is possible to talk of political approach; it might amuse the Hon'ble Minister himself, it might amaze the public to talk of this and that. But we actually find that the people of the mofussal area are dying, are struggling for their very existence, are snatching away morsels of food from the dust-bins, from the refuse and sweepings that are thrown into the dust-bins, out of the dainty dishes served on the table to a pampered aristocracy. We have reports from the mofussal, from my own constituency and from other districts of Bengal, that people are not merely starving, not merely struggling for their existence, but are dying by hundreds. No Government official has the courage to publish the fact that deaths are occurring and that people are starving. The Government instead of helping the poor people out of their difficulties, instead of saving them from the jaws of death, they are gagging them, they are suppressing free expression of public opinion, they are muzzling public opinion in every possible way. Sir, this is the position that confronts us.

Sir, you will permit me to read out certain portions. I have no quarrel with Mr. Suhrawardy or with the Government which he represents for having launched the recent anti-hoarding campaign to unearth stocks that might have been hoarded in any part of the country; but there is something not merely suspicious, but definitely mischievous to have excluded Howrah and Calcutta which contain the largest number of profiteers, hoarders and middlemen. On the one hand, Sir, the policy of the Government in excluding Howrah and Calcutta from the anti-hoarding campaign has defeated the very purpose of this drive, on the other hand by throwing open the markets of the Eastern Zone to the agents of buyers and middlemen in Calcutta and Howrah along with Government appointed agents it has created an unfortunate situation in the country, resulting in the shooting up of prices in the mofussal areas in Bengal as also in the neighbouring provinces. The result of this piecemeal drive has been anything but satisfactory. Seven or eight million or eight lakhs of maunds of hoarding—I do not know the exact figure—and Mr. Suhrawardy is nervous to announce in any certain terms the results of his anti-hoarding campaign unearthed as a result of the food drive are not sufficient even to meet the requirements of Bengal for more than a fortnight. But if Mr. Suhrawardy had the courage, the candour, honesty of purpose, he should have applied the same measures to Howrah and Calcutta as well, irrespective of any consideration. But he dares not, Sir,

antagonise vested interests; he dares not, because he depends for his very existence on the tender mercies of these people. He dares not estrange the sympathies of his political confreres either; whatever may be the intensity of the people's sufferings, however bitter may be the miseries of the people. The reason, Sir, is not administrative, but political; the policy being inspired by no lofty motive, but by an unnatural desire to cling to office regardless of human sufferings. But whatever may be the administrative reason, Sir, the primary duty of any administration or any Government in any civilised country of the world is to take the responsibility of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked.

Sir, it is encouraging to find that this move—should I say, a sinister move—on the part of the Bengal Government has not escaped the notice of the Government of India. The Hon'ble Food Minister of the Government of India, Sir Azizul Haque, has suggested that without any further delay these two big industrial centres, Howrah and Calcutta, should be brought under the operation of the anti-hoarding drive. But the Government merrily goes on unsympathetic to the cry of distress from millions of people of Bengal, to the agonies of helpless mothers in desperate search of a morsel of food for their suckling babies and of famished fathers who snatch away a few morsels from the sweepings in the dust-bins.

I had a friendly talk the other day with a Muslim League friend without importing any political consideration into the discussion. I asked him "How are you going to save the food crisis and relieve the miseries of suffering millions?" He said "God alone knows; God alone can save." I appeal to God, I pray to God that He might make it possible for better sense to dawn on the masters that be in the land. It reminds me of that memorable sentence of Wordsworth—"Much it grieved my heart to think, what man has made of man". It is not God, it is man who by his anti-social activities, it is this Government by its unsympathetic attitude, an attitude impervious to reason, impervious to frantic appeals from the people of Bengal, impervious to their sufferings, unsympathetic to the cry and agonies of the people that has complicated the situation and poisoned the whole atmosphere. We are not free people, we are emasculated, we are helpless. One political cataclysm after another, revolution after revolution, shock after shock, one degrading measure after another, repression after repression have laid us low politically, sucked us dry economically, bled us white completely and dragged us down from the height of glory to the depth of degradation and humiliation. If we could have taken the law in our own hand, these millions of people would have risen in revolt and would have made it impossible for any Government that exist in the land to ignore their sufferings and to ride roughshod over their feelings.

Sir, no Government can exist except through the co-operation and sympathy of a contented civil population, but Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy's statement reveals a lack of appreciation of the realities of the present situation and utter indifference to the miseries of the people. Instead of trying to get a first-hand information of the actual difficulties that face the province at the present moment, instead of trying to satisfy the hunger of

millions of people, instead of taking the entire responsibility on themselves to feed the people, they have shifted the responsibility on to the people themselves. Who are these people, Sir? They are people who are dying of starvation, people who are weighed down by miseries and sufferings, people who do not hesitate to satisfy their hunger out of the refuse that is thrown in the streets, people who do not refuse to share the same food with dogs and swine. Sir, I have heard of cases where people have snatched away food from dogs' share. This is the state of things which has been prevailing in the province.

I am not raising, Sir, an alarmist cry. It is not an exaggerated view. In season and out of season we have come across not one or two cases, not one or two dozen cases, but hundreds of cases where people have gone without food not for one or two days, not for one or two weeks, but for weeks together. I have personally come across cases like this in the mofussal areas, but that cannot be published because the Government of Bengal with an unsympathetic attitude will gag free expression of public opinion. Sir, this Legislative Assembly is the only forum where we can ventilate the grievances of suffering humanity. The Legislative Assembly, thank God, is the only place where in spite of the false assurances of the Hon'ble Minister, in spite of his spacious promises, in spite of misstatements and misleading statements that have been issued from time to time, we can ventilate the grievances of suffering humanity and state real facts which can alone throw light on the real situation. If Mr. Suhrawardy could have the courage, if he could have the candour and honesty to confess the real truth in the name of humanity, in the name of justice and fairplay, in the name of suffering millions, then I am sure he would have the blessings of God showered upon him.

Sir, despite the shortage of foodstuffs in the province which has been admitted on more than one occasion by the then Premier, my revered leader, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, and which was borne out by Mr. Suhrawardy's own political collaborator, Mr. M. A. H. Ispahani, on the 10th March, 1943, Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy did not hesitate to issue a misleading statement that there was no shortage of food. Sir, Burma rice had been cut off after the fall of Burma in December, 1941. Huge quantities of foodstuffs had been exported out of the country to meet the requirements at Ceylon, Mauritius, Iraq, Iran and East Indies. These facts are known. In spite of that I do not understand how Mr Sahid Suhrawardy could indulge in this misleading statement. There were military requirements which had to be satisfied. There were surplus population in India whose demand had to be met; there were evacuees from Burma whose demand had also to be satisfied. Over and above that there was shortage of supply due to the cutting off of supplies from Burma. In consideration of these facts there was absolutely no denying that there was shortage of food. Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy in his Rotary Club speech confessed, though indirectly, to a sense of disappointment and despair that he had to stretch his hands to the other adjoining provinces to get supplies evidently to cover the deficit. Why this anxiety, why this frantic effort to stretch his hands across the borders of the province to get

more supplies, to get more foodstuffs? He admitted that indirectly because that was a statement which might belie his previous statements. Therefore, indirectly and in a clandestine fashion he confessed to a sense of disappointment and despair that there was a shortage of food. This was all the more borne out by his anxiety to get supplies from other provinces after the removal of embargo on the movement of commodities in pursuance of the policy of free trade. I am afraid all the plans, all the measures hitherto adopted by the Government have not only been defective but guided by a lack of perspective and a clear sense of the realities of the situation. Sir, it is illogical, it is inconsistent to talk of free trade and shortage of supply on account of difficulties of transport in the same breath. The policy of free trade can only succeed if there is abandant supply within the country; but it has been proved that both in India as also in the province of Bengal there is no adequate supply commensurate with the requirements of the country and the province. Then, again, the policy to allow free licence to private agents along with Government to purchase any quantities of rice from the neighbouring provinces as also from the mufassal areas has only succeeded in squeezing out foodgrains from the Bengal rural homes and filling up the store house of Calcutta's stockists and hoarders. It has sucked the mufassal areas absolutely dry. Instead of solving the food problem of Bengal, it has complicated the situation in other provinces also and has helped to raise the prices there to the same level as those prevailing in our own province. Then again, Sir, control over supply and distribution of foodgrains and other commodities is absolutely meaningless until we are assured that export is completely stopped, whatever might be the stock position today, whatever might be the result of the anti-hoarding drive and Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy has given an unstinted tribute of admiration to the officers and the various committees set up under the protecting wings of his officers, I definitely state that there is shortage of foodstuffs in the province, and I say this with all the force at my command; it cannot be disputed, it cannot be questioned that the results of the food drive have been highly unsatisfactory.

I would refer to a certain portion of my speech delivered in March last on the floor of this House. In that speech I definitely made certain suggestions. First of all, I said that export of rice and paddy from Bengal should be prohibited. I have yet to ascertain whether export of rice has yet been prohibited. If export is not prohibited, whatever quantities of rice are imported from outside, supposing the quantities of rice exported are more than the quantities of rice imported, more than the stock which is in hand there is no meaning in that import. Whatever might be the quantities of foodstuffs imported from other parts of India, Government should arrange for immediate stoppage of export from inside the province. Government, Sir, did recently arrange for import of paddy from other parts of India, but the whole policy has been defeated because Govenment did not accept the suggestion that we made on the last occasion that the existing stock throughout the province should be ascertained and prices of commodities

must be fixed once for all. Unless prices are fixed, this unhealthy competition between the agents of middlemen and profiteers and agents of Government will lead to the raising of prices to an abnormal extent. This has been the actual result. Government's policy throughout has been so defective, so illogical, so miserably lacking in any sense of the realities that, I am afraid, it does not do any credit to a man of Mr. Saheed Suhrawardy's intelligence. Not till there are sufficient foodstuffs to cover the deficit, all schemes would be nothing but a meaningless cant intended to deceive the public into thinking that everything is all right and the situation is going to be brought under control, when actually things are quite the other away about.

Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy, while criticising Mr. Fazlul Huq's Government on the last occasion, remarked that the adjoining provinces were reluctant to part with their surplus foodstuffs simply because they were definitely convinced that Mr. Huq's Government was a Government consisting of nincompoops and inefficient and incompetent men. May I know why are these Provincial Governments today refusing to supply surplus foodstuffs to Mr. Suhrawardy? Should I repeat his language and say this Government consists of nincompoops, hirelings of the bureaucracy, creatures of vested interests, miscreations of Sir John Herbert? These gentlemen have been installed in office on account of a constitutional impropriety which has no parallel in the history of the world. May I know why today the adjoining provinces are refusing supplies to Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy in spite of his frantic efforts to approach the Government of India, in spite of frantic talks, conversations and confabulations that have been carried on from day to day and from week to week between the adjoining Governments and his own Government? That shows that Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy's criticism was not based on truth or any sense of fair-play and justice.

Sir, I am not here to defend the old Government. But I cannot help contradicting a statement which Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy made at a Press Conference on the 13th May, 1943 I will quote from his own speech. He "rebutted the prevalent idea that export and the denial policy of the last year were responsible for the situation and added that these factors were exceedingly unimportant in relation to the stock position as it really was." Again on the 17th May Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy said that "the greatest offence of the last Ministry's food policy was insistence on shortages and encouragement given to hoarders and black marketeers. There was no need for panic. Exports were nil and imports from the Government of India were considerable" and so on and so forth. Mr. Sahid Suhrawardy's argument has been contradicted, challenged, disputed and questioned on the floor of this House. Mr. Suhrawardy has no answer. Sir, political considerations very often colour the vision of many a responsible man and cloud the entire perspective. My revered Leader, Mr. Fazlul Huq, while explaining the reasons for his resignation recently on the floor of the House, has given a cruel reminder of the effect of the denial policy of the Government of India in pursuance of which a particular officer of the Government of Bengal under the instructions of the highest authority in the land advanced Rs. 20 lakhs for purchase

of foodstuffs from the denial areas to an unknown person without any agreement being entered into, without any terms being settled and without the knowledge and consent of the then Coalition Government. Added to this the removal of boats which are the means of transport in the districts of Eastern Bengal bordering on the Bay of Bengal saw the beginning of the serious troubles that were to grow in dimensions as days rolled on. In spite of the protests of the old Government the denial policy was pursued relentlessly, and in a few months of the execution of the policy Barisal, Khulna and a good many other surplus districts were converted into deficit areas, and the country gradually drifted from a bad to worse condition. In consequence of this policy, Sir, stocks were hoarded in Calcutta to satisfy requirements other than those of the civil population and the poor people were left to the tender mercies of hoarders, stockists and profiteers. The removal of boats from the denial areas further affected the economic life of the Province.

And the cyclone of Midnapore devastating the entire district added to the gravity of the situation. All these facts contributed towards worsening the food situation in the province. In spite of all this Mr. Suhrawardy has the courage to say that there is no shortage. Mr. Suhrawardy brought up in the lap of luxury hardly realises the sufferings of the masses in the mufassil areas at the present moment. Free expression of public opinion has been gagged. Any public criticism of the Government policy has been banned. Mr. Suhrawardy himself admitted in his last speech while attacking the old Government that every one was in the grip of shortage and now in spite of Mr. Suhrawardy's recent statements that shortage persists.

May I appeal to my honourable friends opposite and ask them how they can, consistently with the pledges given to their own constituencies, support the Government which has not merely failed to solve the food problem, but has succeeded in aggravating the situation all the more. The policy which has been adopted is not merely defective, but injurious to the cause of the country. It has been designed for cheap political clap-trap, for consolidating the position of the party and of the members of a particular family and not for really solving the serious food problem.

May I, in this connection, also appeal to the members of the European group who are making great sacrifices to save their Empire? We want to make it sufficiently clear that not only we do not stand in their way, but they have our unstinted co-operation in the prosecution of war efforts provided only they support us in our attempts to save our people who are on the verge of starvation. After all whatever may be their assurances that they are fighting for liberty and to make the world safe for democracy, liberty and freedom have absolutely no meaning for us. Our only purpose is to find food for our hungry millions. We have to relieve the distress of suffering humanity, to help people from starvation and to rescue them from the jaws of death.

On this issue I would once again appeal to my Muslim friends opposite to sink all political differences and hush all political controversies. It is only on the basis of a Government which would inspire confidence in the minds of all sections of the people, it is only on the basis of a Government composed

of all sections and classes in this House that the acute food problem can be solved. If we have got to depend upon the sweet-will, if we have to depend upon the good grace, if we have to depend upon the tender mercies of vested interests the problem can never be solved. We have got to protest against the highhandedness and uncalled for interference from whatever quarters they might come—an attitude amply proved by the protests that Mr. Fazlul Huq lodged in season and out of season during his regime.

With these few words, Sir, I support the motion moved by my friend, Mr. Chaudhuri.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I can follow the advice given by the honourable member for the University of Calcutta in the latter part of his speech and try and speak on the subject before us tonight in a detached way and try to place before the Hon'ble Minister, through you, a few suggestions that have come to my mind But before I do so, I should like to give my own personal impression regarding one or two points that have been repeatedly mentioned by honourable members opposite

It has been said, Sir, that they were not given that large number of 18 civilians and other officers the present Ministry has by His Excellency the Governor or they would have solved the food problem before they left office. Is it possible, Sir, that, if their statements are correct, there was a suspicion in higher quarters that the intention of the then Cabinet was actually to take the position from bad to worse for the reason that conditions at that time in the country were such that there was a general opinion that anything and everything done by the Government should be upset and should be spoilt? Being suspect, naturally they did not get that support which they expected because getting such support and then not doing the thing would have worsened the position.

Sir, there is another point to which the honourable member for the University of Calcutta drew the pointed attention of the House and in explaining his viewpoint, he deliberately tried to mislead you and the House by saying that members of this House who happen to be connected with commercial organisations working with the Government should do this and should not do that. Sir, I beg to suggest that limited liability companies and concerns are outside the operation of that suggestion.

May I also remind the House, through you, Sir, that I have been called a Sindhi on many occasions. I am as much a Sindhi as you are. I have nothing to do with Sind. If I were to go to Sind and tell a Sindhi that I was a Sindhi, he would simply drive me out of the province.

My own personal opinions about this problem are that neither the previous Ministry nor this Ministry nor the one before that is responsible for our troubles today. I hold those people responsible who showed complacency in Malay, in Burma and in the many problems affecting India. The Government of India was caught napping. This country was called the arsenal of everything that could be found for the Egyptian front. Foodstuffs were sent out recklessly. Organisations were started in London and

their agents appointed here sent all they could out of the country. And all the time the great military experts never expected that Japan would jump into the field of battle as it did. The result was that Burma went out of our hands and with it the rice we used to import from there. Rice that we should have retained in the country went out, as I have said, for war purposes. The Government of India is the main culprit in this field and not any other.

I should also like to point out—and I entirely agree with the Hon'ble Leader of the European Group—that the mind of the Government of India is not properly made up in regard to the application of the principle of free trade. We get one instruction today and another tomorrow, with the result that nobody knows either here or at the Centre what is going to be the policy tomorrow.

Imagine, Sir, free trade within a limited area called the Eastern Zone with the Eastern States thrown in and leaving the rest of India to do as it pleased. I may also point out to the House, through you, Sir, that there has been a "rebellion" in almost every province. The Prime Minister of the Frontier Province actually declared it publicly that if one grain was taken out of the Frontier Province he would become a rebel and not allow the Government of India to take it out and this, and now I am speaking on high authority, has been the case with the other provinces also. The scheme, although too late, which the Government of India tried to place before the country was sabotaged not by the people but by the Provincial Governments in many provinces. The Government of India, not being courageous enough, could not put this official "rebellion" down and in the net result we in Bengal have been placed in a most awkward and precarious position. In this connection I offer a suggestion for what it is worth and I hope the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies will convey it to the Centre. This tinkering with the problem will not do The Government of India must come out as one buyer in the whole country, and the Government of India must take upon itself the responsibility as one seller and one distributor all over the country. Every grain in the country must be taken possession of: otherwise, deficit provinces and surplus provinces and all other nonsenses which have brought us to this pass today will continue. I shall not enter into any argument about things that have been said and what the Muslim League was going to do or not going to do, but this much may be uttered that so far as human effort is concerned I can assure honourable members opposite that no stone shall be left unturned to grapple with the situation provided the gentlemen at the Centre do not poke their noses awkwardly into a very difficult problem which they have not yet understood well.

May I, Sir, also point out to the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Supplies that there is such a thing as fish in Bengal which requires his immediate and careful attention. Bengal lives on rice and fish, but I have my doubts it the Government has paid that attention to the supply of fish which it deserves. Fish might prove a great help to the people in the districts, especially along banks of the rivers, as supplementary to what they get of rice and cereals.

Another problem, Sir, which, although it may take a bit of time, deserves the attention of the Hon'ble Minister,—is to create Consumers' Co-operative Societies. They will be financially cheaper than official organizations and in certain directions the rapacity of either the official or the money-lender or the profiteer or the businessman will be completely eliminated. We may not be able to start them at once but the subject does require immediate consideration at the hands of the Hon'ble Minister. Argument was also raised in the debate that Bengal being on the war front and there being so many extra men in the army to be fed, the chances of the people of Bengal getting sufficient food are disturbed. That, Sir, is not correct, so far as my knowledge goes. The food for the army comes from the Centre and therefore it does not affect our problem at all. The honourable member representing the Landholders' Constituency also made mention of the refugees. Most of these refugees are Bengalis by origin. They cannot go to any other province. I have had something to do with this problem. These refugees also are a Central responsibility. A maximum of two lakhs of refugees cannot run away with all the food in Bengal. But, Sir, in the last analysis, as I am trying to look at it, the problem resolves itself into "one buyer and one seller". That alone will take us out of the bog into which we are today.

Mr. KIRAN SANKAR ROY: Mr. Speaker, at the fag end of the debate when every conceivable point has been discussed with ability and some time with some amount of temper and when members must be tired of hearing the same argument over and over again, I have no desire to make a long speech. I shall be brief and I shall try to be to the point.

Mr. Speaker, before I come to the food problem itself I should like to say a word or two about the antecedents of the present Ministry. That, Sir, is a sordid story and I have no desire to go into it in details. But, Sir, it is relevant because it has been admitted on all hands by members of all parties that the Cabinet which wants to solve the food problem of Bengal must get the confidence of the people in the first instance. Sir, the Ministry which has been brought into existence by the Governor of this province by questionable tactics and which retains power and position by the vote of the European block is not a Ministry which will readily inspire confidence of the people——(A voice: Question!) I hear, Sir, some one questioning this statement of fact, but I challenge him to see what happens when votes will be counted if the European Group remains neutral——(Cries of "Yes, we will see" from the Government benches.) Mr. Speaker, that is the sort of Government we have now got in our province. However, I will not labour on that point further.

Mr. Speaker, the present Ministry came into power on the 24th of April. It has been in power for nearly two and a half months. I hope it will not be contended on its behalf that it had a very short tenure of office because when we are faced with famine and starvation surely we cannot go on experimenting and waiting for an indefinite period. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to tax the patience of honourable members by quoting figures, but I want to remind them that when this Ministry came into power the price

of rice was as follows: in May coarse rice was selling at Rs. 23 per maund; now it is Rs. 30; medium rice was at Rs. 24, now it is Rs. 32; fine rice was at Rs. 25, now it is Rs. 33.

What, Sir, is the condition prevailing at the present moment? What is the condition of the people of Bengal today? People have sold their utensils—whatever utensils they had, they have sold their cattle and are trying to sell their land and are prepared to sell their children if they can get purchasers and they are abandoning them now. They have eaten things which men never dreamt they would eat and now in dark despair they are resigning themselves to fate. That is the picture, Sir, which member after member irrespective of his party has given to this House.

Now, what is the picture which Mr. Suhrawardy gives? In the statement which has been circulated Mr. Suhrawardy claims that "this", he means "the drive", "has restored confidence amongst the poor and has transferred the panic to the minds of the hoarders". He claims that prices have fallen and, Sir, he says "I am greatly satisfied with the result."

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House is that a true picture? If that is not a ture picture and if Mr. Suhrawardy cannot solve the food problem, he should at least stop humbugging the people of this province. Sir, it has been claimed on his behalf that he has energetically applied his mind to the problem. I am prepared to concede him that. It has been claimed that he possesses dynamism. Sir, frankly speaking, I distrust dynamism. Dynamism not controlled by moral purposes has been the cause of half the trouble of this world. From that point of view a burglar has more dynamism than a householder. Mr. Suhrawardy is a great and real friend of mine. I would not like him to imitate a burglar.

Mr. Speaker, what is the plan, what is the programme which Mr. Suhrawardy puts forward for the solution of this problem? If you read this pamphlet which, I am sure everyone of you have read, you will find that Mr. Suhrawardy is a changed man. I have known Mr. Suhrawardy for nearly 30 years or more. We have been together in the college here and in the same University abroad. I know his defects and I also know his merits. I hope he will not contradict me when I say that sweetness of temper has never been one of his virtues, but if you read this pamphlet you will find him full of generosity, full of thanks. He begins of course by thanking Mr. Ispahani. He thanks Mr. Ishaque. He thanks the Hon'ble High Court. He then patronises the members of district boards, commissioners of municipalities, professors of colleges, teachers of schools and he also thanks us, the various party leaders, the vast public and also the press—not of Bengal but the press outside.

Mr. Speaker, if you analyse these, you will find he is profuse in his promises. If you turn to page 7, you will find he has promised free kitchens. He says that gratuitous relief will be undertaken—mark the word "will" always—loans will be distributed, test relief will be undertaken and gratuitous relief will be given on a large scale. Help will be given to agriculturists to grow more food and every assistance will be

given. Irrigation and drainage schemes are under consideration. Sir, I am over 50 and I do not remember a time when irrigation and drainage schemes have not been under the consideration of Government.

Coming to the present—his only panacea is the Food Drive. Now, let us examine the drive itself. If it had been a drive to collect statistics, it would have been objected to by no one, but, Sir, this drive is not that. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has charged this Government with making blunders. I would go further and I attribute malafideness to this Government. The drive was undertaken so that poor agriculturists and poor householders will be frightened and will put their grains which they had stored up for their own use, on the market so that profiteers from Calcutta may go and buy them. That, Sir, is the real purpose of this drive. This drive has failed and failed utterly. It was bound to fail because it was bad economics. You cannot have free trade and self-sufficiency at the same time. It has failed because the food committees were not representative. You have heard from my friend Mr. Dhirendra Narayan Mukerji how Congressmen have been deliberately kept out of these committees. It has failed and failed miserably because Mr Suhrawardy was from the beginning obsessed with the idea that there was large hoarding by the agriculturists and householders Mr Suhrawardy today says that he was not stressing on shortage, on scarcity because it might create panic. But, Sir, that is a new story.

On the 4th May, 1943, a Press Note was issued by the Civil Supplies Department saying among other things "The Hon'ble Minister of Civil Supplies is of opinion that prices now prevailing are purely speculative and bear no relation whatever to the true stock position The Hon'ble Minister is convinced that any deficit this year can be fully met from the carry-over of 1941-42 crop The public may therefore rest assured that there is no cause of fear in ultimate shortage of food-grains."

On May 13, speaking at a Press Conference, Mr Suhrawardy rebutted the prevalent idea that exports and the denial policy of the last year were responsible for the situation and added that these factors were exceedingly unimportant in relation to the stock position as it really was.

On May 17, speaking at a public meeting, the Hon'ble Minister observed: "The worst feature of the last Ministry's food policy was their insistence of shortage and the encouragement given to hoarders and black-marketeers. There is no need for panic. The exports are nil. The imports from the Government of India are considerable. Army requirements count for a very small amount of rice. The number of evacuees is not such as can cause any dislocation Whatever the trade may do, the price must fall and to those who keep on hoarding I give a word of warning and to you a message of hope that it will not be long before the prices will crack."

Therefore, it will not do today for Mr Suhrawardy to say that he was suppressing the fact of shortage because he did not want the people to be panicky.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with the failure of this drive, this Ministry has no plan, no policy and cannot claim our confidence. Now what is the way

out? The way out is this: even at this last moment I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister, to the present Cabinet, to invite all parties really and sincerely and not like the invitation which had been sent to us on previous occasions to form a committee consisting of representatives of all parties, consisting of experts, real experts, and hand over the entire power to such an authority and make the decision of that body mandatory. Then we shall all sit together and see what we can do. If you are unwilling to do this, then the only thing, the only contribution that you can make towards the solution of this problem is to resign and get out. There is no other way out.

Mr. Speaker, I have finished. The issue before the House tonight is simple. Have or have not the Government failed to tackle the food problem in Bengal? Those who believe with us that the Government have failed to give us food, that in one of the richest agricultural countries in the world we are dying of hunger, will vote with us. Those who believe with Mr. Suhrawardy and more with Mr. L. S. Amery that the price of foodstuffs has fallen and will fall, that rice is in plenty and if we are starving, we have only ourselves to blame, I say such men who will believe that will vote against the motion and may God have mercy on their souls.

Remember the dying men and women in your village, the abandoned children, the long queues in Calcutta, the struggle near the garbage heap of the dustbin and then choose your side, your own people or Mr. Amery; the people hungry and expectant will watch you, and I pray you choose well and choose with clear conscience (Applause.)

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the forensic oratory of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee is still ringing in my ears, and I shall mainly confine myself to the charges which he, on behalf of his party and as its *de facto* Chief, has flung on me. He overshadows his colleagues physically, mentally, vocally and histrionically and he deserves special consideration. Before I do that, however, Sir, I may say at once that I do not propose to deal with the remarks of the Leader of the Congress or of Mr. Syed Badrudduja whose vituperations and bad taste and abuses have placed them out of court in this House. I will only make this one remark that they have no right to talk of the sufferings of the people. It is I, it is we, it is this Ministry and this party that has got the right to talk about the people, because we are working for the alleviation of their sufferings; not you, not that party which was in power and which did nothing whatsoever to take the slightest step, that had not the foresight to know what steps should be taken, to meet the calamities that were looming before us in spite of the warnings that were given by us when we were on the other side of the House. Dr. Mookerjee has said that the food drive was fundamentally wrong. He says that Government shifted the responsibility of feeding the people upon the people. This remark has been repeated by several other members on the floor of this House for what reason I don't know. Government has never shirked the responsibility that it has of feeding the people, but Government warned those persons who were indulging in anti-social activities to behave themselves. Those persons

who used to lend out their grain at this time of the year to the poor people round them and who are not doing so out of greed or of panic were requested to release their grain and to liquefy and to liquidate it, and even before the food drive was launched a large amount of grain was thus distributed. I wish to inform the honourable members that when we were in opposition, the Bengal Provincial Muslim League took the initiative in convening a meeting of all the parties. Members of the Congress, I believe its Leader and its Deputy Leader, members of the Hindu Mahasabha, members of the Communist Party, the Radical Democratic Party, the Kisan Sabha, the Indian Labour Federation, the Bengal National Chamber of Labour and some Chambers of Commerce also did me honour by attending at my place, and it was there at this joint conference that the policy of stock-taking and of liquefaction of hoards and of equitable distribution was adopted. This is what we carried out and I cannot understand how that charge can be levelled against us today that it was fundamentally wrong

Dr. Mookerjee has asked me to correct my figures of 70 or 80 lakhs of maunds of hoards that have been discovered I correct those figures. They are not 7 or 8 lakhs of maunds The latest figures are 95 lakhs of maunds. Please let us not get away with this idea that this stock is available for feeding the province Let us not get away with this idea that this is the stock which is a surplus for the people. That is not so. It does not represent the stock for feeding the province, and, therefore, we need not say that it is only 13 days' food; nor is it a surplus stock. It is a stock which has been discovered, most of which consists of hoards above 300 maunds, but some of which also includes stocks which the local Subdivisional Officers have included This stock is available and should be made available to the people of the locality from where it was found; but where, however, there is a surplus, it will be taken from there and sent to the deficit areas. Orders have already been issued to the local officers to requisition these stocks, pay for them, and take them to the deficit areas. I don't think, Sir, that the food drive has failed in any respect. It has gathered round this Government people in the villages; in the distant areas it has brought people together for the purpose of looking after their own interests and for the purpose of co-operating with this Government in the measures which we are taking to alleviate their distress. From the point of view of the Opposition, the food drive has certainly failed because in spite of the opposition arrayed against us I claim that the people of the province are with us and have appreciated our efforts.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What is the total deficit? Have you got the figures now?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Do you think that I did not know when I launched the food drive that my intention would be misinterpreted before the people and that there was a likelihood of me, personally, and the Ministry of which I am a member, incurring unpopularity if I called upon the agriculturists of this province to distribute their stocks amongst their poorer brethren? Many of these agriculturists have to feed themselves. But the piteous cries of the starving people, the beggars and

the destitute who are the first to go under, the smaller agriculturists who had sold their little stock earlier in the season and who could not afford to buy to feed themselves when the prices rose, the cries of these people we could not ignore, and I undertook upon myself the odium of calling upon the agriculturists to disgorge what they possessed and distribute it amongst their more unfortunate brethren. I hope, Sir, that when the results of this drive will come to be assessed in a proper atmosphere, we shall be judged by what we have done to relieve the distress of those who were running about from door to door asking for a morsel of bread which they never begged before in their lives.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Have they ceased to beg now?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The position has worsened. The position must worsen, since then, if you consider that several months have rolled by. Since the last Ministry left and we took office the food-grains have been consumed instead of being replenished. You will realise, if you have any sense of justice left in you, that the situation must worsen since then. Honourable members on the other side have stated that when the late Ministry left office the price of food-grains was only Rs. 16 and now it is standing at Rs. 30. Even if it did, I would not have been ashamed, but I just want to correct honourable members on the other side. On the day, when a demonstration was held outside this House (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: By your friends) when the food debate was going on, the price of rice was Rs. 24 and not Rs. 16. After the last Ministry left, the price of rice rose during the interregnum. When we came into office the figure it is asserted was Rs. 23. The price actually stood at Rs. 26. The price has risen and today's price is Rs. 27.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Where?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: In Calcutta.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Can you get us at that price?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: If you go and buy wholesale in the market you will get it.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: He is reading from a slip handed to him by Mr. Ispahani.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Today's price is Rs. 29. You say it is Rs. 27. Will you give us ten thousand maunds?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: This is the statement which I have got from the market outside and it is true, whatever the honourable members sitting inside the House may say who know nothing at all. The price of medium rice is Rs. 28-8 to Rs. 29 and that of fine rice Rs. 30.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Rs. 33.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Even if the price had risen higher—and the price did rise higher—there would be a justification.

Several months have rolled by and the stock has been consumed. May I remind honourable members of this House of what the sole accredited leader of the Opposition told one of his many audiences—that no Ministry could possibly solve the food problem.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Have you solved?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: He added that there was no doubt in his mind that the price would rise to Rs. 60 and Rs. 70. That was what the sole accredited leader of the Opposition said to one of his many audiences. Now, Sir, the prices would surely have risen to those heights if we had not undertaken the measures which we did in order to keep down the prices.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: What are those measures?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Those measures are considerable in number. One is the Food Drive; one is tightening the Food Grains Control Order; one is the processes taken against black markets; prosecutions are considerably larger in number than before; one is the fact that we did not sell permits. That system of permit has been removed and now there is no necessity whatsoever to put the price paid for the permits on to the price of the commodity.

Then, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee passed on to a tirade against Messrs. M. A. Ispahani. The name is a mistake. In the speech which was circulated to the House I referred to them as Messrs. M. A. Ispahani & Co. They are actually a limited firm known as M. M. Ispahani, Ltd. I allowed Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee to give vent to all his vitriol because I knew that he was proceeding entirely on wrong facts. He thinks that he has got good information from my department. But his information and the information of several other honourable members is information gathered from petty little clerks, gathered here and there, and is entirely incorrect.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Will you have an open enquiry?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: There is no need for an open enquiry.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Then, many scandals will come out.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I will tell you what the facts are. There is no need for an open enquiry. I am perfectly certain that there never will be found the slightest breath of scandal or reproach after this heat and this atmosphere has been dissipated.. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has stated: how has this firm of Ispahani's given us 40 lakhs—he gave fanciful calculations. If they sell at Rs. 22 when the price is Rs. 30 and if they have 5 lakhs of maunds in their possession, it means that they have given up Rs. 40 lakhs, but if they had purchased the same rice at Rs. 14-8 or Rs. 15 and sold it at Rs. 22, they would have made about 40 lakhs profit. Let me tell the House that Messrs. Ispahani sold it to Government at cost price.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: How did you ascertain the cost price?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: All their papers, their documents, their invoices, their books made at the time when they were purchasing for themselves and prepared in course of their business at the time when there was no question whatsoever of their taking an agency will prove that. All these papers have been audited——

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Don't talk of their books and papers.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I know you petty people cannot understand all this——(Cries of "Withdraw, withdraw" from the Opposition benches.)

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: On a point of order, Sir. He must withdraw the expression he has just used or get out of the House. (There was again great noise and uproar and cries of "Withdraw, withdraw.")

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am quite prepared to withdraw the expression, Sir, if you so desire.

Mr. SPEAKER: You should not only withdraw the expression but you must address the Chair and not the members.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, I withdraw the expression; but when you are asking me to withdraw that remark may I request you to be good enough to look into the speech of Mr. Badruddoja and delete the very vituperative remarks made by him against me——(A voice from the Opposition block: Why did you not raise a point of order at that time?) Because we thought it was beneath our dignity to take notice of that. Sir, they cannot understand generosity: it is not in their nature.

Mr. SYED BADRUDDOJA: Sir, I never used any vituperative language in my speech.

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: On a point of order, Sir. Has the Hon'ble Minister withdrawn the words he used?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has already withdrawn.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Sir, when I was referring to the firm of Ispahani I stated as a fact that Mr Ispahani sold the entire stock of their rice to us at cost price and that stock was not the stock within Bengal so that——

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: On a point of information, Sir. May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to say what is that cost price?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: They cannot even be charged with hoarding. Another charge is that two crores of rupees—some say, three crores, and some say, 180 lakhs—has been advanced to the firm.

I obtained the figures yesterday as to how the accounts stood, and the figures go to show that we stand indebted to Mr. Ispahani or to the firm to the extent of Rs. 65 lakhs——

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: What was the total amount of advance?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No advance was made.

All along Government has been indebted to this firm; all along they have made more purchases for us than the money they have got from us. The honourable member opposite, I mean Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee, seems to have got some sort of information from some underling of Government, and I am quite prepared to show the facts and figures and the accounts to Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee any time he wishes to inspect them.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I, Sir, at this stage put one simple question to Mr. Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies? Sir, I have been listening to the debate and was just going to interrupt and to submit through you to the Minister that on this solemn occasion no word should be used which will have ultimately to be retracted. Having made that preliminary observation I put this simple question: I have seen papers with Government officials showing that Government has advanced a sum of Rs. 1,80,00,000 to Messrs. M. A. Ispahani & Co. without settling the terms of advance beforehand, without going through the usual formality of having any document executed, without the Government Solicitor or other Solicitors first considering the terms to be imposed after the advance had been made. I am asking this question to elicit information: it may be what I say is not correct, but that is what I have seen. That is a simple question which I do not want the Minister to evade: was there or was there not an advance given by Government to this firm? I want a categorical answer, yes or no; and then we will find out later on whether the statement is correct.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The answer definitely is no. Moneys had been paid to Messrs. Ispahani & Co. against purchases made by them. That is no advance. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Oh! Oh!)

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Money was paid before purchase or after purchase?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: All money has been given after purchase. Can there be anything more open when I am asking Dr. Mookerjee to see the accounts?

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Was it given before the delivery of the stuff?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee should note that they are not sellers, they are only agents of Government and if they make a purchase on our behalf they must be given money.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: On a point of order, Sir. Is this sort of point of information to be allowed? I think these are the tactics that the Opposition has adopted when it finds itself to be in the wrong. I want your ruling on this point, Sir. When the Opposition members spoke they were allowed to have their say without interruptions. It is not fair on their part now to deliberately obstruct the Hon'ble Minister in his speech. I want your ruling on this point, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order? Is it whether it is permissible? If so, I may tell you that this sort of questioning is generally not permissible, but in exceptional circumstances this may be permissible.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I have got one or two things. I am not going to be obstructive at all. I am asking for information. May I ask at this stage——

Mr. SPEAKER: You, as the Leader of the Opposition, have not spoken, and I understand it is due to your illness. Now, in the course of the speech of the Minister in charge if anything comes out about which you want some more information, I will give you special leave to ask him questions at the close of the debate.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: All right, Sir.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I thank you, Sir, because I had been rather diverted from my speech. I, however, do not regret the interruption because it has made the point still clearer.

Now, Sir, Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee having got that information from somewhere stated that Mr. Ispahani is contesting the proposition that he cannot buy on his own account. Our terms of agreement are that he cannot buy on his account as long as he continues to be the agent of the Government of Bengal. (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Have the terms been signed by him?) The terms have been arranged and have passed through both our solicitors and have been agreed to right from the beginning that he can make no purchases on his own account and he can make no purchases on the account of others except with the consent of the Director of Civil Supplies. He has been allowed to make purchases on behalf of the Government of India. The Government of India have utilised his services to make purchases outside the eastern zone in many places and they have done so on terms far more favourable than we have given him and they have done so without security without which it seems no business can be transacted. I hope I have sufficiently answered the insinuation regarding Mr. Ispahani that have been levelled from time to time by the members on the opposite section of the House.

It is further stated that this was a blessing in disguise to Mr. Ispahani. It was no question of blessing. Mr. Ispahani not only had to close down his own rice business, but he had to close up several other businesses in order to be able to send his agents to various places in which we required them. He has placed his own servants and agents in jeopardy—they are being prosecuted in various places, their stocks have been looted. He has placed

himself and his money and agents in jeopardy. As I have stated, it has been no blessing to him. Can I expect the other side to understand it? Can I expect them to understand how a person can make sacrifice for an ideal for which he is prepared to go to any extent? I hope, Sir, that a time will come when honourable members from the other side will make similar sacrifices for the ideals which they profess.

Now, Sir, one further point has been raised regarding the exclusion of Howrah and Calcutta from the food drive and many persons, before Mr. Kennedy spoke, placed the entire responsibility for the exclusion of Howrah and Calcutta on those whom they call our masters, viz., the European Group. Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Hendry have made it clear that they themselves impressed upon me on several occasions that the drive against Howrah and Calcutta should be undertaken. There can be no doubt that I realised that this should be done, and I again tell you that it is for administrative reasons that we have not been able to do it. I again tell you that there could be no other reason as I shall explain. There are in Calcutta and Howrah about 600,000 premises and many of these premises are nothing else but rabbit holes with one entrance and several exits. I will need a whole army for the purpose of taking stock of the stocks in their hands. There are other reasons too. The main problem before us was firstly to get the agriculturist to liquidate his stock for the benefit of his poorer brethren to whom he used to lend his stock before. That did not apply to Calcutta and Howrah. In fact, it is easy, I maintain, to organise the whole of Bengal rather than Calcutta and Howrah where each one is an individualist, where each one is an egoist, where one does not know the neighbours who are living on either side and each one has got to be treated quite separately. Orders, I may inform the House, have already been issued encircling Calcutta and Howrah and the industrial areas and no food-grain can pass out of this area any longer, although food-grains may enter these boundaries tomorrow, a special Gazette is going to be issued promulgating this order which is already in force. Now, Sir, it will not be long before Calcutta and Howrah will be searched. In a way perhaps it has been correct to exclude Calcutta and Howrah in the beginning. I am certain that honourable members opposite who, while condemning this Food Drive on the one hand, insist on the other hand that Calcutta and Howrah should not have been excluded from this drive, would have condemned the inclusion of Calcutta and Howrah if these two places had been included in the beginning. They themselves would have shrieked thus from the housetops. If you really want to seek an excuse for the exclusion it is not the correct excuse because the correct excuse is administrative reasons—then turn again to the statement of your accredited leader who said that if we begin to search the houses and take stock of food-grains, he will organise the people in such a manner that there will be riots and bloodshed before such stocks could be taken. (Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq: That is a misstatement.) Would I not be justified after such a dire threat of your accredited leader to pause and think and consider and, if I take a stock of Howrah and Calcutta, to do so in such a manner that not a single hoard underneath the *taktaposh* may remain unseen?

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Suhrawardy, I do not want to interrupt you. You are addressing as "your accredited leader"; that is not a proper way of addressing.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I beg your pardon, Sir; but that is sometimes done.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has then gone on to controlled shops and said that if there was irregularity in these controlled shops, if there was corruption there, you could have suppressed them, but why throttle the ordinary channels of trade. These controlled shops are not ordinary channels of trade. They are a few tradesmen—400 out of 6,000—to whom Government supply a certain amount of rice for distribution to the poor who can stand in queues. Taking away this rice from them and distributing it properly through Government distributing centres linked to zones is by no means something which can be considered to be anything but laudable.

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee has stated what has happened to that order that no one could be allotted a controlled shop unless he was three years in trade. Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee ought to know what happened to that order. That order was scrapped in his time. (DR. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: My time?) Yes. The Civil Supply Syndicate which was in existence—which had come into existence the previous day—was given 25 shops in your time. It had no licence under the food-grains control order; it was not in business for three years; and in fact there are any number of such controlled shops operating at the present moment which are being continued and which had been given by Dr. Mookerjee's Ministry to persons who never had a licence. (DR. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: And you are following that!) No, Sir, I am not following that. (DR. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: You want to give to your own men.) I want to scrap that system altogether and do away with all that dirtiness, filth and nepotism. (A voice from the Opposition: You have begun very well.)

Now, Sir, I am sure that the House would like to know a little bit of what has been done regarding getting supplies from outside. It has been stated that I have been insisting on the fact that there was no shortage. Member after member has repeated that statement. Sir, I have never said that there was no shortage. (DR. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Wonderful!) On the other hand, I have stated that insistence on shortage will not help us. Does it not predicate that I admit that there is a shortage? I said "insistence on shortage will not help us." It predicates that I admit that there is a shortage. (DR. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: What about hand-bills?) A hand-bill has been flourished, but every hand-bill does not pass through my eyes, although I do claim that very little from my department issues without my knowledge. Apart from that if you read between the lines you will find that when I gave the speech on sufficiency it was based upon the fact of receiving supplies from the Government of India.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Here is a statement of 8th May that "there was in fact a sufficiency of food-grains for the people of Bengal.

Full statistical details which will clearly demonstrate that there is a sufficiency will shortly be published." If the Hon'ble Minister wants to back out let him do it decently.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: If the honourable member will read the beginning of that speech, he will find in that very speech that the reasons for my arguing for sufficiency have been given, and the reason is supplies from the Government of India. That statement which Dr. Mookerjee is talking of was made when General Wood was here and General Wood assured me that he was going to send roughly 550,000 tons of rice to Bengal.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: That was on the 8th May before General Wood said that.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: No, no. That was when General Wood was here. I remember the whole thing precisely, 550,000 tons of food-grains were promised us; this was later particularised as 350,000 tons of rice, 224,000 tons of wheat and 200,000 tons of millet. Had these things been in our hands now, I think, I should be able to feed the province. It was immediately after that that a Press Conference was held in Writers' Buildings where Sir Azizul Haque and General Wood placed the statistics before them, the basic plan of the statistics being 550,000 tons of foodstuffs from the Government of India. The basis of the sufficiency of those statistics was, again I state, 550,000 tons from the Government of India. I remember the figure distinctly.

The point is that I cannot be charged with having neglected my duties. Supposing I had said that there was no shortage, have I not done everything possible to get supplies from outside? Have I shirked my duties? The whole policy of free trade was based upon the fact that supplies must come in from outside. Each of the provinces which were asked to send food-grains under the basic plan failed. Do you want to know the figures? 63,000 tons were to come from Assam, and we got 2,000 tons. 37,000 tons were to come from Orissa. Orissa helped us and we got 25,000 tons. 185,000 tons were to come from Bihar. They refused to send anything and with difficulty they have promised to send 3,500 tons for Darjeeling. 15,000 tons were to come from the United Provinces. They did not send us anything at all. The honourable member stated that I should have approached the provinces before free trade was adopted. Could I do anything under these circumstances when the provinces were refusing even to be cajoled by the Government of India to send food-grains to us? The Government of India had cast upon them the responsibility and they were refusing to undertake it. There was no option left to us but to make them realise the sufferings we were going through. Today we are in a much better position. Today we are in a situation to make agreements with them which, I hope, will shortly fructify.

Again free trade plan was sabotaged. As every member of the House knows or should know, the Government of India tried to introduce free trade for the whole of India. Loud were the protests from all parts of India and a Conference was held in Delhi. This Conference has certainly done a great deal of good (Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: What are the goods!) Does the honourable member expect that I shall come with a pocketful of rice in my pocket and produce it here? (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Pocketful of promises not to be fulfilled!) That, Sir, is a matter for the Government of India, and I have no doubt that those promises will be fulfilled. (Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: You could bring at least a pocketful of *dilli ka laddus*.) (Laughter.)

Sir, before I deal with them, I should like to tell you how much we have received from the Government of India—50,000 tons of wheat out of 224,000 tons; 9,106 tons of millet out of 200,000 tons. Under the emergency plan they were to have sent us 25,000 tons of rice and 15,000 tons of millet within one month after free trade was established. All that we have got is 11,000 tons of rice. The honourable members will, therefore, realise that the Government of India foud that it was unable to meet the commitments that it had made and it proposed this new free trade for the whole of India. The Conference has voted against it. I do not quarrel with the decision of the Conference. I do not object, Sir, to the provincial barriers once more going up provided supplies to Bengal are secured, and I am indeed fortunate that I am able to announce to this House that at this Conference we had been able to achieve something which, I trust, will assist us to tide over our present difficulties. In the first place, the neighbouring provinces have been asked to declare how much they can supply to Bengal. In the second place, the Government of India must be satisfied that their declaration conforms to facts. In the third place these Provincial Governments must set their procurement plan into operation and stocks must be on the move to Bengal and the Government of India again will judge whether sufficient steps have been taken to secure supplies before the trade barriers are put up. Free trade will continue to operate during that time, and more than that the provinces have agreed that they will honour the contracts which have been or will be entered into until the provincial barriers are put up again.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Not future contracts?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: They will honour all the contracts which will be entered into unless provincial barriers are put up again.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: Read what Mr. Jha has said in the papers today?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: It does not matter what he says. This is important. In the meantime the Government of India have realised their great responsibilities to Bengal and will continue to send us supplies. They do not absolve themselves of their responsibilities as they

did when they introduced free trade within the Eastern Zone. They are taking every step to rush supplies to Bengal and they have realised that immediate supplies are necessary. The Hon'ble Member in charge of the Food Department, the Hon'ble Member in charge of the Transport Department and many other officials have gone to Lahore for the purpose of arranging supplies to Bengal. The supplies will come by special trains (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: When?) from the Punjab and by steamers from Karachi. (Ironical cheers from the Opposition benches.) If they do not come, what do honourable members expect me to do? Can I bring the special trains along with me? I have to rely on the good offices and on the good-will of the Government of India. I have to rely on their assurances. They realise their responsibilities to Bengal. I do not think that it will carry us one whit further if I tell them, "There is no use your promising to send us, you will not do it." They are in the dominating position. We are in the position of recipients. If those supplies do not come what suggestions have you? You have suggested a joint petition to His Majesty's Government, through the Government of India, that Bengal is in jeopardy and it is the duty of His Majesty's Government to come to its aid.

I am constantly in correspondence with the Government of India on the subject, and I hope that the results will be satisfactory. We have also secured the attention and the sympathy of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. Already a military ship has been placed at our disposal for the transport of food-grains to Chittagong, and I am expecting similar assistance for other transits by sea. The military authorities have also agreed to place five ships at our disposal for bringing supplies from Sind. The military authorities have also agreed to place some road transport at our disposal and to send food-grains to Bengal and to utilise their own movements for the purpose. As a gesture of good-will which I greatly appreciate and which I hope the honourable members opposite will appreciate (Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: We will if the goods arrive.) they have agreed to cut out the ration of rice which was allotted to the European soldiers. The Government of Inida are arranging to send provisions by sea as well in order to relieve the congestion on railways, and they have also agreed that we may buy as much wheat products as we can without any restriction from the Punjab. From this point of view, therefore, we can face the future with a little more hope and a little less despair than that which has enveloped us. I can go no further than that. More than this I believe that we have secured the sympathy of our neighbouring Governments, the Governments of Bihar, Orissa and Assam, and of the Resident of the Eastern States.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Why did you then make such remarks about them?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I had no sanction to come to separate terms with them. (Interruption.) I wish honourable members would listen to me because this is of fundamental importance to us. If this thing is not done, we shall be in jeopardy. I had no sanction to come to

separate terms with them. As soon as I am relieved from the present business of the Legislature I propose to take this matter with them separately or jointly. I do not think it will be very difficult. My first concern is with the grain which we have already purchased and which they have agreed to release, and I am certain that the sooner that I can come to an arrangement with them, the sooner will the barriers go up and the sooner our supplies will be secured. Over and above this I have no sanction to control the price for the entire region. There is no justification for this madness in prices which has overtaken the Eastern Zone, and even if the stock position justifies the high prices prevailing in Bengal which I still dispute, the helpless position of the poorer section of our countrymen cannot warrant it. I propose, and the other Governments agree with me, that a controlled price should be fixed within the region. It will not be the same price throughout the province, but will be parity prices. And more than this we have come to an understanding that this controlled price will gradually decrease.

I have been asked to give figures of the amount of money spent on agricultural loans, test relief works and gratuitous relief. Some figures have been placed in my hands by the Revenue Department. I need not take the members through the detailed figures, but I could give them the total Rs. 1,10,65,200 has been sanctioned (Mr JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: Only sanctioned!) not only sanctioned but spent on agricultural loans. Rs. 33,92,100 is outstanding for sanction. I can tell the House that not only this but more money will be sent to the various districts. We have sent a memorandum to the Government of India asking for more funds. I had the benefit of a discussion with the Finance Secretary of the Government of India, and the Hon'ble Finance Member of the Government of India and I had this assurance that the money which we had asked for would be found for us on certain conditions.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: What is the amount?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Three crores of rupees, but this is nothing if we get food-grains as well and the value of those food-grains will run easily into fifty crores.

Mr. SANTOSH KUMAR BASU: This is no new promise. This was given even to the last Ministry.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: May I point out to the honourable member that a well-thought-out memorandum, a well-planned scheme for relief in various forms—for relief through grains in kind as well as in cash—has been placed before the Government of India and this is no more an empty promise or an empty demand. For gratuitous relief Rs. 62,15,000 has already been sanctioned and sent and Rs. 14,62,000 is outstanding. For test relief works Rs. 92,39,700 has been sanctioned and sent and Rs. 2,25,000 is outstanding. I do not know if the honourable members would also care to hear about the food-grains which I have sent to the various districts in Bengal. I wish to place them before the House

just to show that our chief concern has been to provide supplies to the mufassal. When we took office we found that all the grains wich were being sent from outside were captured on the way. It partly went to Howrah, partly to Midnapore and the rest was sent to Calcutta and nothing was sent to the various districts in spite of their great demands. When we pressed for free trade, we unlinked the priorities with the idea of building up some stocks and some reserves which we could send to the mufassal. I have been able in some measure to meet the requirements of the deficit areas, but I do not wish to suggest that what I have sent is satisfactory even to me. I wish that I could have sent more to those areas, but our resources have to depend upon replenishment of supplies from the Government of India. I have been enabled, I say here, to do so on account of the magnificent and satisfactory manner in which the firm of M. M Ispahani, Ltd., have acted and have been able to secure these supplies for us. I have that lesson before me of four agents that had been set up by the late Government when they could not secure even ten lakh maunds from the surplus districts within Bengal even in the month of January when the grain comes to the market.

Sir, to Faridpur Sadar I have already sent 19,212 maunds of rice and 15,000 maunds is now on the move. To Rajshahi 16,438 maunds of rice and 19,843 maunds of paddy To Goalundo 11,178 maunds of paddy and 15,000 maunds of rice is on the move either to Rajbari or Goalundo. To Madaripur 3,100 maunds of rice and 15,000 maunds of paddy is on the move. To Gopalganj 5,000 maunds of rice. To Dacca 12,000 maunds of rice and 10,000 maunds of paddy. And these and the figures which I have placed before the House are irrespective of large amounts which have been requisitioned by the local authorities and placed through the controlled shops. As a matter of fact all the figures I am giving are irrespective of the amounts which the local officers have either by purchase or requisition acquired and put through the controlled shops. To Manikganj 5,000 maunds of paddy and to Narayanganj 7,000 maunds of paddy have been sent. I am afraid these figures are somewhat underestimated as I am aware of having ordered further amounts which will far exceed the figures which have been placed in my hands. Honourable members may remember that considerably larger stocks of rice and paddy were seized from merchants at Narayanganj and sold through the controlled shops. To Hooghly 25,000 maunds has been sent. To Nadia Sadar 15,000 maunds of rice; to Krishnagar 9,149 maunds of rice; to Kushtia 9,644 maunds of rice and 4,500 maunds is on the move. To Jessore 3,500 maunds of rice. To Mymensingh 5,000 maunds of rice; to Tangail 1,695 maunds of paddy; to Bardya Bazar 5,400 maunds of paddy. To Chittagong 14,226 maunds of rice and also 26,519 maunds of paddy and 27,000 maunds of rice is also going there by steamer and 45,000 maunds of rice has been purchased by the Commissioner, and I am sending another consignment of 40,000 maunds of rice. To Noakhali I am sending 20,000 maunds of rice. This is already on the move. To Tippera we have sent 21,990 maunds of paddy. To Munshiganj 8,489 maunds of rice. To Midnapore 22,000 maunds of rice and 4,580 maunds of paddy. This is irrespective of the Revenue Department's purchases for Midnapore relief. To Pabna

Sadar 20,000 maunds is on the move and to Serajganj 15,000 maunds of rice. To Darjeeling 30,000 maunds of rice. Howrah has been given 76,000 maunds of rice and 24-Parganas 29,000 maunds of rice. To Chandpur I am sending another 25,000 maunds of rice which will serve the distressed area and to Bhola 10,000 maunds of rice with *dal* and millet. Over and above this I have sent to the various districts 55,000 maunds of *dal* and gram. Of millet I have sent the following quantities—12,500 maunds to Madaripur, 12,500 maunds to Mirzapur in Tangail, 12,500 maunds to Dacca, 30,000 maunds to Chandpur, 17,500 to Pabna, to Noakhali 20,000 maunds, to Faridpur 25,000, to Howrah 10,000 maunds. Over and above this I have sent considerable quantities of *atta* to various districts——

Mr. JOGESH CHANDRA GUPTA: How many days' consumption will it give?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Everybody will be able to eat.

Of wheat and wheat products I have sent to the extent of 214,752 maunds over and above what I have sent in the shape of rice and more is still to go in the month of July. I can also at the same time look forward with considerable degree of confidence to be able to ration Calcutta. It may be on the basis of austerity diet but such rationing is surely called for when there is no sufficient food-grains and every one must curtail his consumption.

Here, Sir, may I reply to an impatient and unjust and ill-informed criticism to my slogan, "Eat less rice!" Surely, the slogan is not applicable to those who are starving or who have no rice to eat. Surely, the members of the Opposition have sufficient common sense to realise that this is applicable only to those who can afford to take other diets. It is applicable to the members sitting in this very House. We should make every endeavour to give up our rice diet and take to substitute food-grains and to substitute foods and leave the rice consumption to the poor who cannot afford to take other class of grains. Surely, I cannot be so cruel as to call upon persons who are too poor even to purchase rice and who have been starving to eat less rice, and surely those who charge me with this form of derisiveness and joke for their own political purposes may refrain from perpetrating such a cruel injustice upon me. And, Sir, this is not all. Not only do I hope to be able to send more from Calcutta but I have placed myself in a position through the agency of the Food Drive to send resources immediately to areas in distress and these stocks and local surpluses will begin to move as soon as relief oranisations are completed. In the meantime I have instructed local officers to purchase the frozen and requisitioned rice and have placed cash at their disposal for the purpose and to remove the food-grains to the distressed areas as emergency cases.

I think, Sir, I have met most of the points which have been raised by the members opposite. Honourable members will pardon me if due to shortness of time I have not been able to deal with all of them, because if I could deal with my subject in my own way and place before them the correct background of the difficulties which have been in our way, I think it will

take several hours to give to the honourable members a proper perspective. But, Sir, there is one further point that I should deal with before I conclude. I do not take any credit for myself for what has been done. We have worked together, and I can tell the House that the officers in the Civil Supplies Department have not spared themselves in any way. They come early in the morning and leave late at night and many of these officers—there are 18 Civil Service officers—are they not have from time to time been laid up with overwork and anxiety, but, Sir, this we have done in pursuance of our duty. I have been in agonies over the distress which is prevalent in Bengal. What is the use of my holding the present Opposition responsible for the present condition? What is the use of their holding us responsible for it when they know in their heart of hearts that we are not responsible? What is the use of all this political game? I do not think, Sir, that I or the Ministry have shirked our duty. I think that we have been able to do something, however little, to ameliorate the distress. Over and over again members of the Opposition have taken up the parrot-cry that nothing can be done without a National Government. I do not know what they mean by it. We have asked other parties to join us. We have begged them and entreated them to join. But it must be on honourable terms and it must not be at the expense of, and the disintegration of, and the demoralisation of the Muslims of Bengal who do, whatever people may say, form the majority of the population of Bengal. We have always sought the co-operation of the other parties. We have looked upon them as our fellow-sufferers. Some have joined us and some have not. To those who have not joined us for political reasons I beg of them not to interfere with our food programme. What we are doing is for the benefit of all, and if we do the right thing I am certain that we shall get the co-operation of all even though we are unable to form an all-parties' Government I am certain too that the parties that are at present not represented in the Ministry will not, and cannot, obstruct policies and measures designed to benefit the poor people of this province. Our hand of co-operation is always extended, not extended in the manner in which the late Ministry extended its hand in the Legislature and crushed the Muslim League outside, but in a true and friendly spirit. If the other parties respond, we are prepared to receive them with open arms or stand the test of public obloquy. In the meantime, may I beg of the honourable members of this House for the sake of the people of the province to co-operate in the measures which this Government is undertaking, and not obstruct it in any way. Let not political factions be utilised to bring disaster upon the province, and before we part let us send up a sincere prayer to the Throne of the Almighty without whose assistance it is not possible for us to tide over our present difficulties, to help us, the people of Bengal, in His infinite kindness and mercy. (Loud applause from Government benches.)

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I would like to know the procedure you want me to adopt. I have got a number of questions to put—not very many but several—and I can put these questions one after another or I can state my questions one after another and leave it to the Hon'ble Minister to give a combined reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is open to you to ask a few questions and it is open to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies to answer them if he pleases. He may answer them or he may not, but you may put a few questions—not many.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, before I put my questions I wish to make it absolutely clear that I do not desire to cast any reflection on the firm of Messrs. M. A. Ispahani & Co. My questions are directed simply for the purpose of eliciting information and in the public interest. My questions are these—

(1) Is it the case of the Hon'ble Minister that the firm of Messrs. M. A. Ispahani & Co., make purchases on their own account in advance and are afterwards reimbursed by Government?

(2) If this is what is happening now, is it the policy which is being continued from the old Government or is it a new policy which has been taken up by the present Government?

(3) Is there any limit to the purchase——

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: On a point of order, Sir, This is an absolutely novel procedure, and I think after the offer that has been made by Mr. Suhrawardy that all the books and accounts would be placed for the scrutiny of Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee I do consider that this is absolutely wrong to go on in this manner.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Leader of the Opposition in course of the speech of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies wanted to put certain questions and I at that time asked him not to interrupt him and I also assured him that I will give him an opportunity of asking a few questions to clear up the position. I have allowed him to do that. I do not think there is anything wrong in it. It is perfectly open to the Hon'ble Minister in charge not to reply.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: It is not a question of not replying. That is likely to be misunderstood. He may be quite willing to reply. But I submit that it is not anywhere the parliamentary procedure, in any case, in India or elsewhere to have a series of questions put after the conclusion of the debate

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: The question of the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition is not a simple one. He says he is asking me about policies, but actually he is asking me for details. This is not a simple question he is asking, and it is really cross-examination by a very astute lawyer.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. The rules provide for reply by a Minister last of all and also the mover or movers of resolutions or somebody on behalf of the mover or movers of motions have a right of reply. Sir, in case the Chief Minister, the Leader of the House, is not prepared to permit the Leader of the Opposition to put certain things in the form of questions I think you may allow him to go on as the Rules

of the Assembly do permit him to put questions even exercising the right of reply on behalf of the entire Opposition. Then, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister in charge or any other Minister will have the last say in the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not well versed with the procedure and practice followed in different Parliaments in the world. Nor am I acquainted with the procedure which either allows or totally prohibits asking for information from the Minister in charge, but certainly I think it would not be permissible to put questions to a Minister in the nature of cross-examination. But there is a proviso in the rules which says that a mover of a motion can speak by way of reply and after that the Minister in charge has got a right to give a reply. That procedure may be followed if there is any serious objection to asking questions and giving replies. The Hon'ble Minister in charge of Food Supply has made his speech and I think the movers of resolutions, if they so choose, may speak with my permission and then another Minister or even the Food Minister may speak. Certainly that is the last stage, but that is the rule. The rule expressly provides that, but I am not going to do that. I think the matter has been fully discussed and it is not necessary any longer that there should be any more debate. If the Leader of the Opposition wants clarification on any point, he may just say: "I want clarification of these points." He should not put his point in the form of questions but just say that these are the points on which he would like to have clarification from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Civil Supplies. I will not allow him to ask direct questions in the nature of cross-examination.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, when a series of questions——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not going to allow series of questions. If you have any difficulty and if you want that certain points must be clarified, put them in this way: "I want clarification on these points" and it will be open to the Hon'ble Minister in charge either to clarify or not to clarify them.

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: My points are these. I want information as to whether there are any limits to the power or permission given to purchase to the firm of Messrs Ispahani, for instance, regarding the radius of operation.

Then, Sir, I would like the Hon'ble Minister to tell us if he admits that at the present moment Bengal is a deficit province I would like to know, Sir, whether the Hon'ble Minister admits that deaths from starvation are taking place every day throughout the province.

Is the Government going to declare Bengal a famine area? Is the Government going to fix the maximum prices of foodstuffs?

When the Hon'ble Minister says that he has been sending foodstuffs to various parts of the province, I would like to know to whom are they being sent—to personal friends, to District Magistrate—to whom and how and through what agency these foodstuffs are to be distributed and to whom are they to be distributed.

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I am very sorry, Sir, that I have to reply to these questions. I am very sorry, Sir, that the ex-Chief Minister of this province asks questions of this type, namely, whether I was sending foodstuffs to personal friends.

As regards the limitation of Messrs. Ispahani, Ltd., they may operate as our agents within the Eastern Zone and they may operate outside that zone with our knowledge. At a time when I had even hoped to be able to get some rice from Sind, from Rajputana, from the United Provinces, I have left no avenue unexplored for the purpose of bringing supplies to Bengal, and these persons have courageously taken up the burden. I do not think that it is necessary to answer that Bengal is a deficit province.

Dr. SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE: Are you prepared to declare Bengal a famine area?

Mr. SPEAKER: The debate is over and it is now my duty to put the resolutions to vote. I propose to put first resolution No. 17 moved by Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas.

Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL: On a point of order, Sir. We suggest that the resolutions be put in the order in which they were moved, so that we may know how matters stand. The first resolution was moved by Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri. I know, Sir, that you have a right to put any motion you like in the order you may choose, but there are certain motions which are more comprehensive and if they are voted down less comprehensive motions may come in because the decision of the House on a comparatively less comprehensive motion will not, in any way, be affected by the decision on the other more comprehensive one. The usual practice is to have the more comprehensive motion first and then gradually come down to less comprehensive motions.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: To save time—it is now about 10-20 p.m.—I would appeal to members of the House that it would be much better to concentrate on one or two motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is exactly what I am thinking of. (Addressing the Leader of the Opposition.) Do you agree to the proposal made by the Leader of the House that you will concentrate on one or two motions and as regards the others they will be put to the House but there will be no division?

Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, Sir. We want to concentrate on two motions, namely, one moved by Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri and the other moved by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal.

The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN: These may be taken up first in that case.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will put the other motions first, because with regard to the others there will be no division and then I will put the other two motions.

The motion of Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas, that this Assembly is of opinion that Government should immediately promulgate an order under the Defence of India Rules to control the maximum prices of the existing paddy and rice and also of the coming crop of paddy in order to bring down those prices to a level approachable by the poor section of the people of the province, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Charu Chandra Roy that this Assembly is of opinion that the continued deterioration in the food situation and the prolonged suffering of the people for want of food evidence the failure of the Government to tackle the food problem in the province. And this Assembly condemns the Government's failure in arranging proper supply of food to the people and urges the Government to declare Bengal as a famine area so as to take upon themselves the full responsibility for feeding the entire population, was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmad Khondkar that this Assembly is strongly of opinion that the present Ministry stands condemned for its utter failure to improve the food situation of the province was then put and lost.

The motion of Rai Bahadur Jogesh Chandra Sen that this Assembly is of opinion that the policy pursued since the assumption of office by the present Government to solve the alarming food situation in the province has failed through the lack of an intelligent and comprehensive plan and the adoption of hasty measures directed not against the big stockists, hoarders and the profiteers but against ordinary consumers, agriculturist-producers and persons of comparatively modest means in the rural areas.

This Assembly deplores the failure of the Government to take advantage of the situation created by the removal of inter-provincial trade barriers by negotiations with other Provincial Governments and their adoption for the purchase of food-grains of a procedure based on patronage instead of considerations of public welfare.

This assembly therefore declares that in order to prevent the aggravation of the situation beyond recovery, the following steps must be immediately taken:—

(*i*) declaration of the province of Bengal as famine area and the stoppage of all exports therefrom;

(*ii*) vigorous prosecution of the "Grow More Food" campaign with provision for supply of necessary manures and financial assistance to agriculturists;

(*iii*) arrangements for the importation of foodstuffs into Bengal from surplus provinces and from outside India;

(*iv*) regulation of the movement of crops within the province in order to ensure that the deficit areas are not denuded of even their inadequate stocks;

(*v*) provision of finances for the purchase and distribution of any surplus discovered in any part of Bengal; and

(*vi*) acceptance of responsibility by the Government to provide food for the people during the present crisis

was then put and lost.

The motion of Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhawmik that this Assembly is of opinion (1) that the Government has failed to solve the food problem of Bengal properly for which millions of people of the province are almost without food and are dying like cats and dogs from starvation; (2) that the Government has failed to declare that the province is under the grip of famine and to do necessary works for the relief operation; (3) that the Government has failed to import rice, paddy and other foodstuffs from the neighbouring provinces and to supply them to people at the cheaper price, at which the people can purchase; (4) that the Government has failed to make anti-hoard campaign successful as most of the rice and paddy have gone outside the deficit areas and which has been purchased by the Government agents; (5) that the Government has failed to publish the result of food census which will show colossal deficit of food in the province; and (6) that the Government has failed to take census of Calcutta and Howrah when major portion of rice is lying stocked by the merchants, businessmen and other capitalists was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Dhirendra Nath Sen that this Assembly is of opinion that the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister of Civil Supplies on the 5th July, 1943, on the food situation in the province betrays a lack of appreciation of the continued deterioration in the food situation in the province on the part of the Government and their failure to tackle the problem by shifting their responsibility and initiative in solving it to voluntary efforts of the people only. This Assembly is further of opinion that the Government should have declared Bengal as a famine area and taken measures for ensuring supply of food-grains to the people by a complete stoppage of all exports of food-grains outside the province, by imports, through negotiations, from other provinces, of adequate quantities of rice, wheat and other food-grains and through the good offices of the Government of India, from abroad, and by an equitable distribution of the available supply in rural as well as in urban areas while satisfying accepted nutritional standards, and by promoting the "Grow More Food" campaign by making provision for supply of sufficient quantities of good seeds, manures including synthetic fertilisers, crop-planning, irrigational facilities, suitable agricultural loans to enable cultivators to extend their operations, and utilisation of fallow and waste lands was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed that this Assembly is of opinion that the policy enunciated in the Anti-hoarding order promulgated by the Ministery has utterly failed to solve the food problem of the country and is further of opinion that the Anti-hoarding drive has caused positive mischief by excluding Calcutta and Howrah from its operation and including the agriculturists in its operation, was then put and lost.

The motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri, namely—

This Assembly is of opinion that the present Government has failed to tackle successfully the food situation in the province and is further of

opinion that the following measures be immediately undertaken to meet the aggravated situation and relieve the acute suffering of the people, viz.—

(1) that Bengal should be declared a famine area and Government should organise and undertake requisite food-supply throughout the province accordingly,

(2) that all export of foodstuffs from the province on any account should be completely stopped and movement of foodstuffs out of deficit areas within the province be restricted,

(3) that negotiations with the other Provincial Governments should be immediately undertaken for importing foodstuffs from the areas administered by them by direct Government purchase,

(4) that Government purchase of foodstuffs from other provinces through certain favoured agents at the sacrifice of provincial funds should be abandoned,

(5) that adequate quantities of wheat and other foodstuffs should be imported from abroad and other provinces to meet the deficits in normal requirements and provide for additional demands on account of the war situation,

(6) that the scheme of anti-hoarding drive should be so revised as to properly define hoarding and to protect the legitimate interests of growers and small consumers and not to promote hoarding by big stockists and traders,

(7) that the "Grow More Food" campaign should be seriously undertaken by—

(a) supplying sufficient quantities of good seeds;

(b) providing for adequate irrigation facilities; and

(c) making suitable advances to cultivators for purchasing cattle and for expanding agricultural operations

was then put and a division called.

(When the ringing of the division bell stopped.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. Before I put the motion to the vote of the House I should like to make one request to the honourable members of this House. I hope they will remember the dignity of the House and will desist from canvassing within this Chamber.

The division was then taken with the following results:—

AYES—88.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi.
Abdul Jabbar Paiwan, Mr. Md.
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah).
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Banerji, Mr. P.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barman, Mr. Upendra Nath.
Basu, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Das, Babu Radhanath.

Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Datta, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, Mr. A. K.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Habibullah, Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jalan, Mr. I. D.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall.
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukerji, Mr. Dhirendra Narayan.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh.
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi.
Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker.
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Roy, Mr. Kishori Pati.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Roy, Shib Shekhareswar, Kumar.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath.
Sen Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Shamsul Huda, Maulana.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

NOES—134.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna).
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Jabbar, Maulvi.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed (Noakhali).
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdulla-al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rasohid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. (Howrah).
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah (Rangpur).
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abidur Reza Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Aftab Ali, Mr.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Aulad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Abul Masud, Kazi.
Barma, the Hon'ble Mr. Premhari.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prasad.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chakrabarty, Babu Narendra Narayan.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Das, Rai Sahib Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Das, Mr. Menmohan.
Edbar, Mr. Upendranath.
Emdadul Haque, Kazi.
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhut Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Mymensingh).
Gladding, Mr. D., C.I.E.
Golam Rabbani Ahammad, Maulvi.
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Gomes, Mr. R. A.
Goswami, the Hon'ble Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib.
Hamilton, Mr. K. A.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemaity Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Hayweed, Mr. Rogers.

Hendry, Mr. David.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Hodge, Mr. H. R.
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H., M.B.E.
Jajaiuddin Ahmad, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kennedy, Mr. I. G.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Leisk, Mr. John.
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
McPherson, Mr. G. P.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr. (Begra).
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Maulvi (Tippera).
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Mandal, the Hon'ble Mr. Jogendra Nath.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahadur.
Mohsin Ali, Mr. Md.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Mukerjea, the Hon'ble Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Mullick, Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Pulin Behary.
Musharruff Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Mustagawsal Haque, Mr. Syed.
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K.
Nazimuddin, the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir, K.C.I.E.
Nooruddin, Mr. K.
Norton, Mr. H. R.
Pain, the Hon'ble Mr. Barada Prosanna.
Powell, Mr. J. A.
Raikut, Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Rajibuddin Tarafdar, Maulvi.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji.
Sahebe-Alam, Mr. Syed.
Salim, Mr. S. A.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, the Hon'ble Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Skipwith, Mr. W. E.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Smyth-Osbourne, Mr. D. G.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Thakur, Mr. Pramatha Ranjan.
Therman, Mr. C. M.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M., C.B.E.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C., C.I.E.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.
Zahur Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi.
Zilliur Rahman, Shah Choudhury.

The Ayes being 88 and the Noes 134, the motion was lost.

(The result was received with cheers and table-thumpings from Government and European benches and also from the gallery.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I regret to note that there had been clapping in the gallery which is not permissible. I hope this will not be repeated.

The motion of Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal that this Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Bengal has so far failed to satisfactorily tackle the serious food situation in the province, and with a view to bring about early relief the following measures should be adopted without any further delay:—

(*a*) the handling of the food situation should forthwith be taken out of the arena of party politics and should be completely entrusted to a Central Food Council representative of all major political parties and a few experts on production, transport, nutrition and distribution;

(*b*) the province of Bengal should be declared as a famine area so that the responsibility for feeding the entire population may devolve upon the Government;

(*c*) there should be a complete stoppage of all exports of foodstuff from the province on any account whatever and there should be no scope left for public suspicion in respect to the same;

(*d*) attempts should be made to procure, by negotiation with respective Governments, sufficient quantities of food-grains from other provinces till the *aman* crop of Bengal is harvested;

(*e*) efforts should be made to obtain imports of wheat and other available foodstuff from countries abroad as much to meet the present deficits in the normal requirements of the population of Bengal as to provide for the additional demands on the resources of the province on account of the war situation;

(*f*) more vigorous measures should be adopted to promote the "Grow More Food" campaign through (*i*) supply of sufficient quantities of good seeds, (*ii*) adequate facilities for irrigation, (*iii*) increased cultivation of cultivable waste land, (*iv*) conservation of cow-dung manures and encouragement for the use of composts and other manures including synthetic fertilisers, (*v*) encouragement to fodder crops, (*vi*) suitable advances to the cultivators for enabling them to undertake intensive cultivation, (*vii*) State guarantees of minimum prices for food-grains produced by the agriculturists of Bengal for a period of at least three years; and

(*g*) steps should be taken to prevent waste in the consumption of food in any form,

was then put and a division taken with the following results:—

AYES—82.

Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hamid Shah, Maulvi.
Abdul Jabbar Palwan, Mr. Md.
Abdul Kader, Mr. (alias Lal Meah).
Abdul Majid, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Banerjee, Mr. Pramatha Nath.
Banerji, Mr. P.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Barman, Mr. Upendra Nath.
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Das, Babu Radhanath.
Das Gupta, Dr. J. M.
Das Gupta, Srijut Narendra Nath.
Datta, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Dolui, Mr. Harendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Fazlul Huq, Mr. A. K.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Gupta, Mr. Jogesh Chandra.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Habibullah, Nawab Bahadur K., of Dacca.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jalan, Mr. I. D.
Jonab Ali Mazumdar, Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall.
Lahiri, Babu Ashutosh.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Mookerjee, Dr. Syamaprasad.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ibrahim, Maulvi.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Mukerji, Mr. Dhirendra Narayan.
Mukherji, Dr. Sharat Chandra.
Mullick, Srijut Ashutosh.
Mustafa Ali Dewan, Maulvi.
Nandy, Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Paul, Sir Hari Sanker.
Poddar, Mr. Anandilal.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra

Roy, Mr. Kiran Sankar.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Roy, Shib Shekhareswar, Kumar.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sanyal, Dr. Nalinaksha.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Sen, Mr. Dhirendra Nath.
Sen, Jogesh Chandra, Rai Bahadur.
Sen, Babu Nagendra Nath.
Sen Gupta, Mrs. Nellie.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Shamsul Huda, Maulana.
Sinha, Srijut Manindra Bhusan.
Sur, Mr. Harendra Kumar.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Wallur Rahman, Maulvi.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

NOES—133.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakeem, Mr. (Khulna).
Abdul Hakim, Maulvi (Mymensingh).
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Jabbar, Maulvi.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed (Noakhali).
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdulla-al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rashid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S. (Howrah).
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah (Rangpur).
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abidur Reza Chowdhury, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Abul Masud, Kazi.
Aftab Ali, Mr.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Aminullah, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
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Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
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The Ayes being 82 and the Noes 133, the motion was lost.

Prorogation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have it in command from His Excellency the Governor that the Bengal Legislative Assembly do now stand prorogued.

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